



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

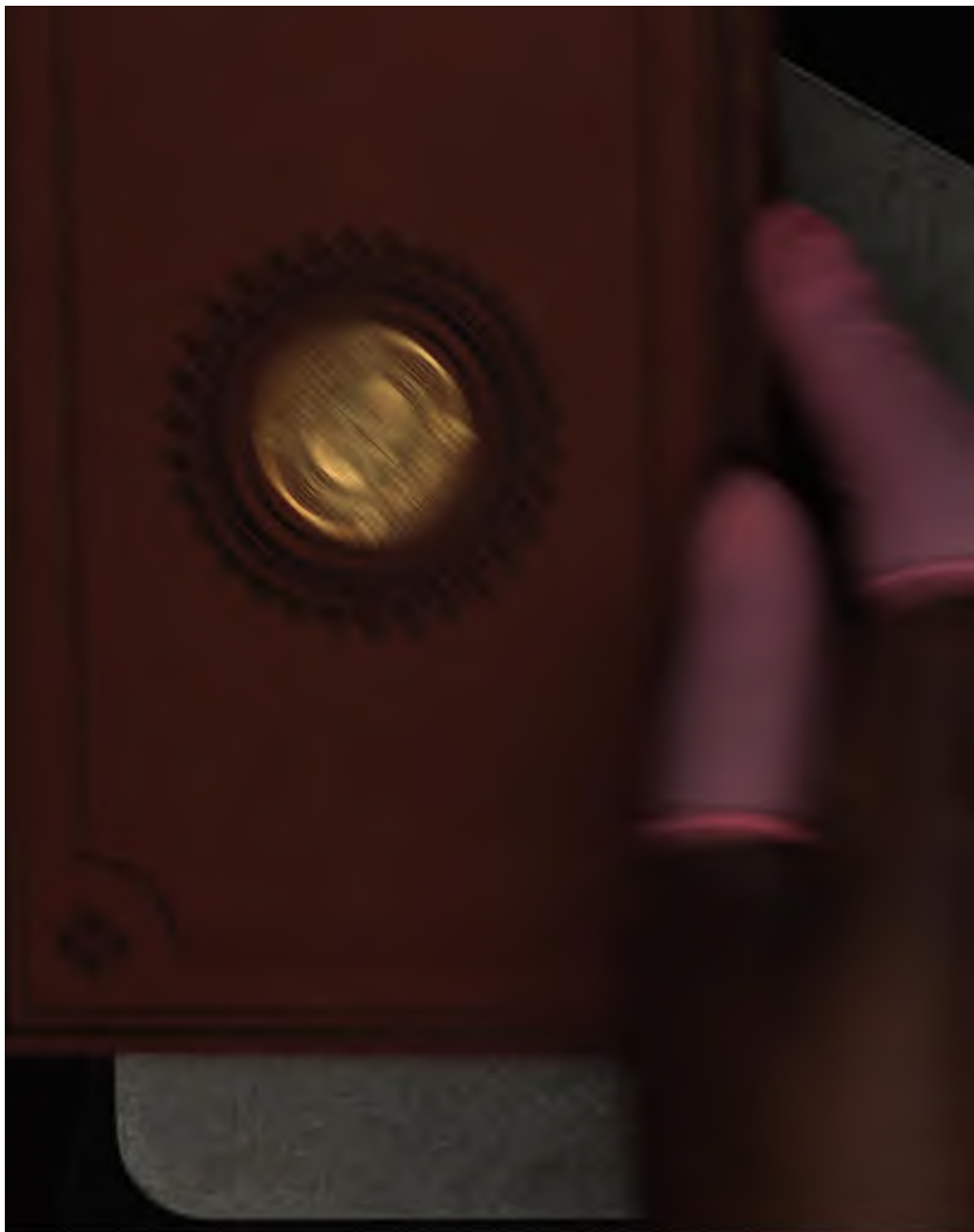
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600024953T





600024953T





1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.



BALBOA'S FIRST VIEW OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN.



PICTURES OF TRAVEL

IN

FAR-OFF LANDS:

A Companion to the Study of Geography.

CENTRAL AMERICA



" Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits ;
.... I would entreat your company
To see the wonders of the world abroad."

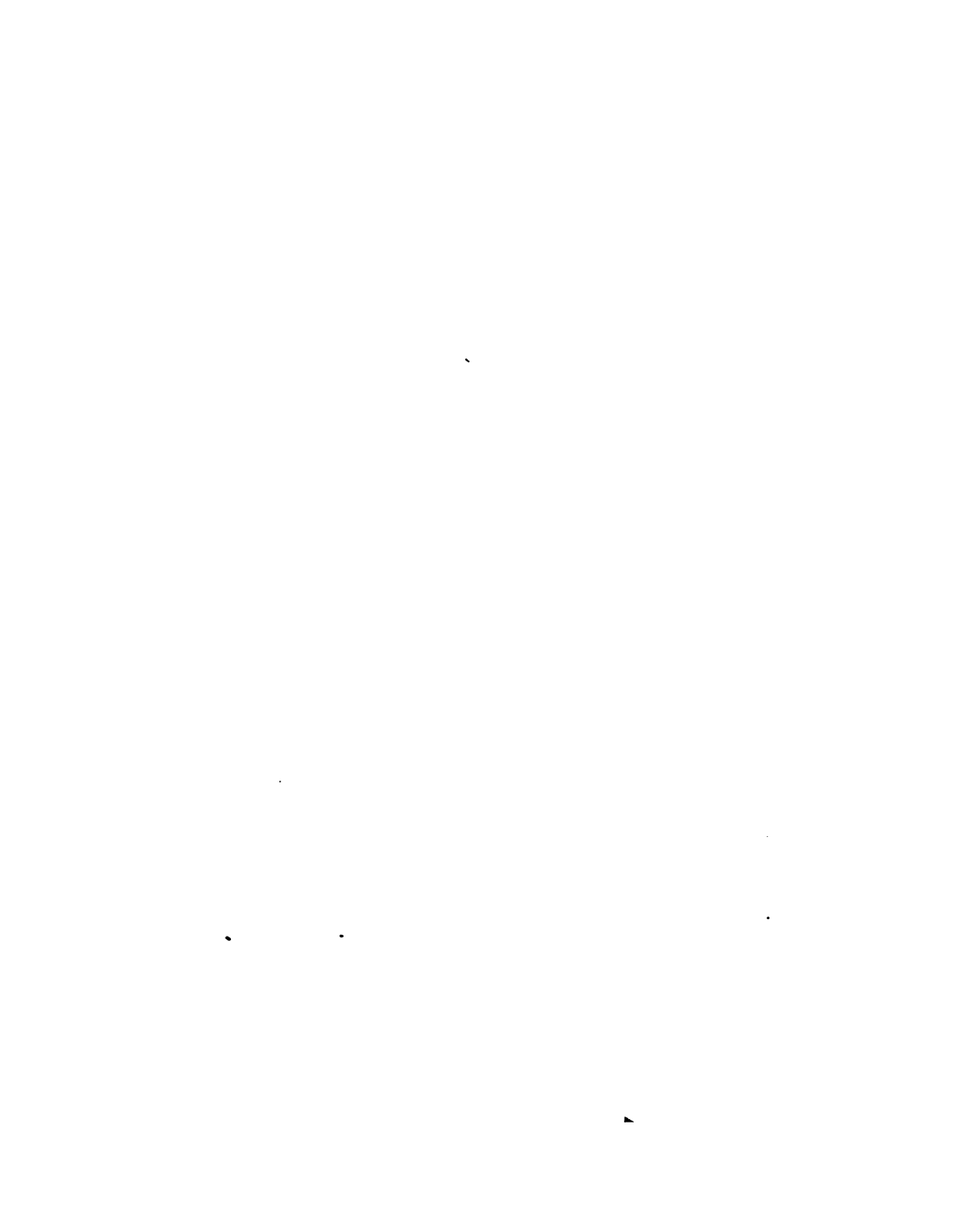
SHAKESPEARE.

LONDON :

T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW ;
EDINBURGH ; AND NEW YORK.

1871.

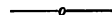
203. 7 157.



Preface.

THIS volume is the second of a Series designed to render the study of Geography attractive to the young. Our plan is to present a bright and vivid picture to the imagination, instead of dry details of facts to the memory, which, when learned as a task, are too often forgotten. In our first volume our theme was South America; in the present, we treat of Central America; and here, as in our former effort, we have endeavoured to connect with our description various interesting narratives and adventures taken from works of Travel, Biography, and History, in the hope they may impress upon the reader's mind some of the characteristic features of the land to which they refer.

Contents.



CHAPTER I.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

Physical aspect of Central America—Mountains and valleys—Vegetation—Useful trees—Mineral resources—Animals—The feathered tribes—Amphibia and fishes—Insects 11

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY AND FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

First discovery—Its state when discovered—Expedition of Cortes—Conquest of Guatemala by Alvarado—Guatemala in ancient times—City of Guatemala founded—Its situation—Destruction by a water volcano, then by a fire volcano. 27

CHAPTER III.

GUATEMALA.

Description of the State of Guatemala—Travelling in Guatemala—Perils and adventures—A strange repast—Haciendas of Guatemala—Lassoing the cattle—Sugar hacienda—The cochineal insect..... 43

CHAPTER IV.

THE CITY OF GUATEMALA.

General appearance of the city of Guatemala—Houses—Vehicles—The people and their various costumes—Mesones—The public dining-room—The earthquake—Los Altos—Quezaltenango—Indian communities—Santa Catarina—Indian dress and manners—A journey by moonlight—First view of the Pacific Ocean... 60

CHAPTER V.

SAN SALVADOR.

Topographical features—Mountain system—The river Lempa—Cultivation of indigo—Description of the plant—Balsam of Peru—Sonsonate—Volcanoes—The lighthouse of Salvador—Description of the city of San Salvador—Account of its destruction by an earthquake.....77

CHAPTER VI.

HONDURAS.

Origin of the name—Climate—Aspect of the country—Productions—Mahogany—Houses of the mahogany-cutters—Their way of life—The mahogany season—Other precious woods—The chapulin—Wild animals of Honduras—The iguana—Hiccatees—Turtle—Serpents—Minerals of Honduras—Chief ports—Description of Truxillo—Comayagua—Indian village.....96

CHAPTER VII.

THE RUINED CITIES IN HONDURAS.

Number of ruined cities visited by Mr. Stephens—His visit to Copan—Description of ruins—Procession of monkeys—Mysterious origin of these cities—A lodging in a hut—Clearing the trees away round an idol—Purchase of the ruins—Further description—Discomforts in the hut—Tortillas—Visit to the quarries...128

CHAPTER VIII.

NICARAGUA.

Description of Nicaragua—Life in Granada—Chocollitos—A parrot devoured by a deer—Ant engineers—Slave-holding ants—Leon Men attacked by wasps—A rat-catching snake—A monkey family—A Jicaral—A philosopher in a thunder-storm—A voyage on the San Juan—Mr. Roberts tried as a spy—Condemned to be shot—Unexpectedly saved—Parties in Nicaragua—General Muñoz—Fruto Chamorro.....145

CHAPTER IX.

COSTA RICA.

Description of Costa Rica—San José—Climate—An Englishman in difficulties—A singular story—An energetic woman—Coffee—Bivouacs of the bullock-drivers—Dulce and aguardiente—Don Juan and his retinue—A lady lost in the Serapiquí—An uncomfortable journey—Ascent of the volcano Cartago—View of the two oceans.....170

CHAPTER X.

BRITISH HONDURAS.

Buccaneers—Origin of the name Belize—First formation of the settlement—Disputes between the British and the Spaniards—Gradual enlargement of the British settlements—The Belize river—The mangrove—Sailing on the Belize river—Story of Manicoura—The Scotch buccaneer—"The Destroying Hawk"—Treachery of Andrews—Manicoura's despair—Her death—Belize fifty years ago—Gradual improvement—A good governor—Model merchants—The first mission191

CHAPTER XI.

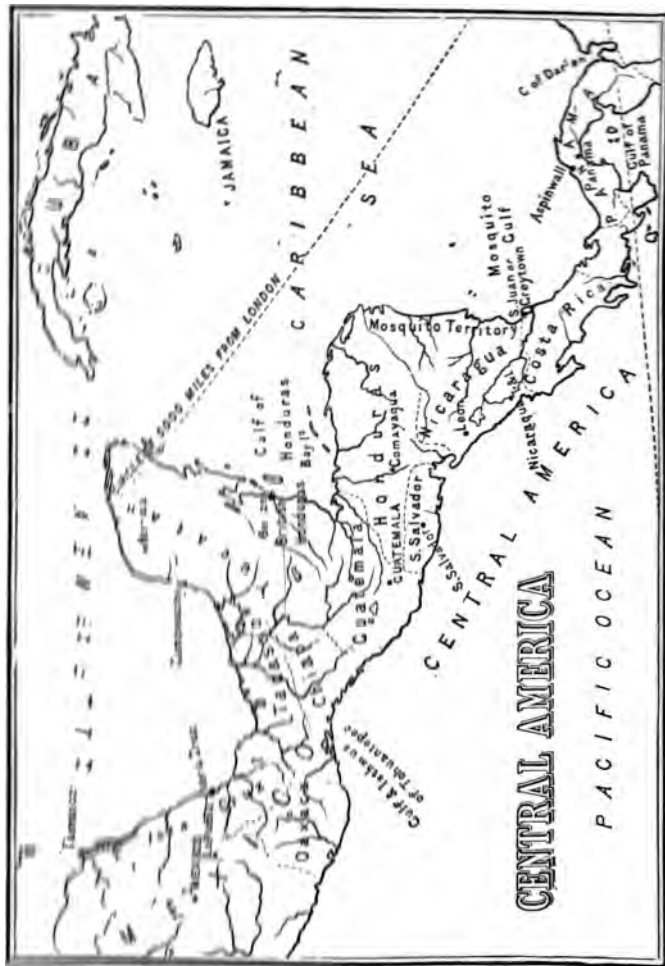
MOSQUITO COAST.

Origin of the name—Description of the country—First discovery—British influence—"Admiral Rodney"—A singular introduction—The consular residence—Mosquito royalty—King George and his master—A voyage on the lagoons—Supper with "hunger-sauce"—Indian mode of cooking fish—Cocoa-nuts—The "paper that talks"—"Lord Nelson Drummer"—Palm wine—Palm cabbage—Poison snakes—Iguanas—The "battle of the pigs"....208

CHAPTER XII.

PANAMA.

Description of the Isthmus—First discovery by the Spaniards—Vasco Nufiez de Balboa—Joins Enciso's party—Obtains the chief command—His expedition across the Isthmus—First view of the Pacific—Spanish form of taking possession of the New World—The Pope's bull—English expeditions—Scotch expedition to Darien—Importance of the Isthmus—Various modes proposed for crossing it—American Railway—Aspinwall or Colon—Difficulties in making the line—Thick forests—Scarcity of workmen—Fares—Other schemes for crossing the Isthmus237





CENTRAL AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

THE narrow, tortuous strip of land which unites the continents of North and South America stretches from south-east to north-west about 1000 miles, varying in breadth from 30 to 300 or 400 miles.

Central America, in respect of geographical position, almost realizes the ancient idea of the centre of the world. Not only does it connect the two grand divisions of the American continent, the northern and the southern, but its ports open to Europe and Africa on the east, and to Polynesia, Asia, and Australia, on the west. Looking at the map, we find, at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the Gulf of Mexico approaching to within 200 miles of the Western Ocean,—the waters of the River Coatzacoalcas, which flows into the former, almost interlocking with those of the Chicapa, flowing into the latter. Below this point the continent widens, embracing the high table-lands of Guatemala upon the west, and the broad plains of Tabasco, Chiapa,

and Yucatan upon the north and east. The Gulf or Bay of Honduras, however, closes around this section upon the south-east, and again narrows the continent to less than 150 miles. The country intervening between this bay and the Pacific is marked by a complete interruption of the Cordilleras, and is traversed by a great transverse valley, running due north and south, through which the large river Uru Guasavari flows into the Bay of Fonseca, on the Pacific. Still lower down, and passing the grand transverse basin of Nicaragua, is the well-known narrow Isthmus of Panama or Darien, over which the tide of emigration has twice poured its floods,—once upon Peru, and again upon the glittering shores of California.

Nor are the topographical characteristics of Central America less remarkable than its geographical features. In its physical aspect and configuration of surface, it has very justly been observed that it is an epitome of all other countries and climates of the globe. High mountain ranges, isolated volcanic peaks, elevated table-lands, deep valleys, broad and fertile plains, and extensive alluvions, are here found grouped together, relieved by large and beautiful lakes and majestic rivers; the whole teeming with animal and vegetable life, and possessing every variety of climate, from torrid heats to the cool and bracing temperature of eternal spring.

The great chain of the Cordilleras here, as in South America, runs nearest to the Pacific coast; but in places it is interrupted, as I have already said, and assumes the form of detached ranges and

isolated elevations, groups or knots of hills, between which the streams from the interior high valleys or elevated plains wind their way to two oceans. As a consequence, the principal alluvions border on the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. Here rains fall, in greater or less abundance, for the entire year; vegetation is rank, and the climate is damp, and proportionally insalubrious. The trade-winds blow from the north-east; and the moisture with which they are saturated, condensed on the elevated parts of the continent, flows down towards the Atlantic. The Pacific slope is therefore comparatively dry and healthful, as are also the elevated regions of the interior.

Topographically, Central America presents three marked centres of elevation, which have, to a certain degree, fixed its political divisions. The first is the great plain, or broken table-land, in which is situated the city of Guatemala, and which is upwards of 4000 feet above the sea. Here the large rivers Usumasinta and Tabasco, flowing northward through Chiapa and Tabasco into the Gulf of Mexico, take their rise.

A group of mountains occupies Honduras, presenting an almost mural front toward the Pacific, but shooting out numerous spurs or subordinate branches, like the fingers of an outspread hand, toward the north and east. Between these ranges, and in some cases almost encircled by hills, are several broad valleys, or plains of different elevations, in which are gathered the waters of thousands of rivulets and small streams, forming numerous considerable rivers, which radiate north and east

into the Caribbean Sea, and south and west into the Southern Ocean.

Intervening between this and the third great centre of elevation in Costa Rica is the basin of the Nicaraguan Lakes, with its verdant slopes and gently undulating plains. The nucleus of the elevation in Costa Rica is the great volcano of Cartago, which towers in its midst. Here the Cordilleras assume their general character of a great unbroken mountain barrier, but soon subside again in low ridges on the Isthmus of Panama.

Besides the rivers of Central America, there are a number of large and beautiful lakes, of which the lakes of Nicaragua and Managua are much the largest.

The area of Central America may be calculated, in round numbers, at 155,000 square miles,—very nearly equal to that of the New England and the Middle States of America combined. The population may be estimated at not far from 2,000,000; of which Guatemala has 850,000; San Salvador, 394,000; Honduras, 350,000; Nicaragua, 300,000; and Costa Rica, 125,000.

Probably no part of the earth presents a greater variety of level on a surface of equal extent than does Central America; consequently no country possesses such variety of climate, or offers such facilities of adaptation to all kinds of productions and to all constitutions of men, from the sunburnt inhabitant of a tropical plain to the hardy mountaineer inured to perpetual snows.

The soil, everywhere prolific, is naturally clothed with an infinite variety of plants, from the minutest

fungus to the stately monarchs of the forest. Among these are many of the exotics which are treasured in the hot-houses and botanical gardens of Europe, here trodden down as common weeds. The lowlands are still covered with dense primeval shades, where the jaguar and the cougar—the lion and the tiger of America—prowl undisturbed. Here grow together the tender herb, the prickly bush, the succulent cactus, the fibrous agave, the graceful and diversified palms and palmettos, with all varieties of gigantic trees, their branches groaning under the weight of parasitical plants, whose wax-like flowers assume every shape that fancy could imagine and taste execute. The whole promiscuous assemblage and compact mass of vegetation is bound together by a close net-work of innumerable vines, pendent “bejucos” (or tie-tie), and the tenacious tendrils of myriads of smaller creeping plants. From this thick jungle the sun’s rays are excluded. The rank mass of still life, varying from 150 to 200 feet in depth, is impenetrable to man, except as by means of his cutlass he hews to himself a track, which immediately closes after him, and is perceptible only to the sagacious bushman. The damp exhalations of the bush are baneful even to the sturdy native; whilst the recently made clearance, in consequence of the rapid decomposition of vegetable matter, too frequently proves fatal to the newly settled European. Further up, the open pine ridge presents clusters of fir trees, interspersed with calabash and aloes, or diversified by occasional thickets and long vistas, surpassing in beauty the most exquisite park-scenery. Here the antelopes roam, and numerous herds of

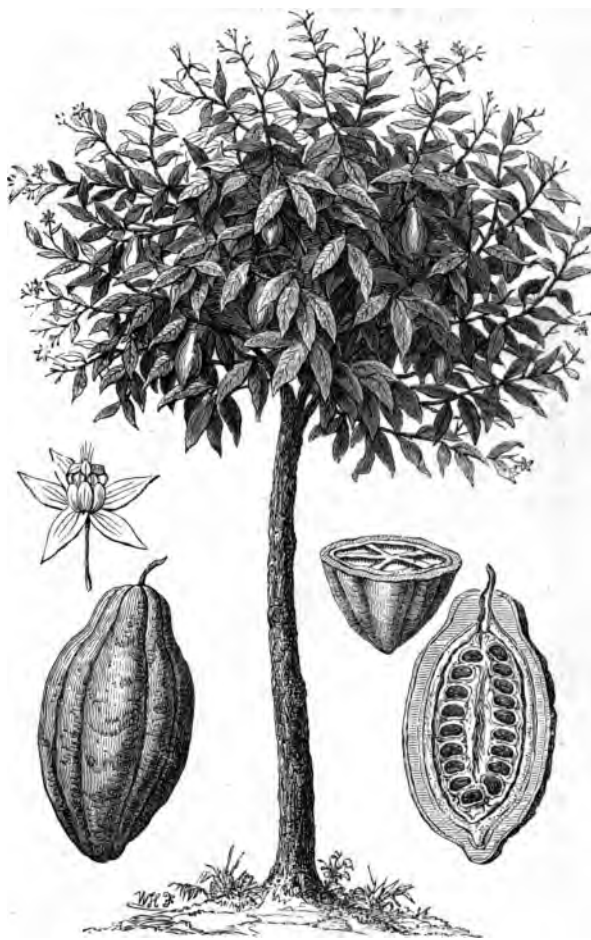
half-wild cattle browse. The more lofty plains are



ALOE.

frequently savannahs, affording rich pasturage, at times gently wooded with trees of softer foliage, resembling the woods of Europe, or with gnarled oaks covered with Spanish moss, which, at once useful and elegant, is here a necessary protection from the keenness of the mountain air. It hangs from the branches in white flakes, which wave and glitter in the sun, and resemble the hoary head of some Druidic sage.

The natural productions of Central America are varied, rich, and almost inexhaustible. The forests, whether on plain or mountain side, abound with valuable timber, among which the mahogany and logwood trees, the only kinds at present marketable, are the almost exclusive object of the trader's attention. Other woods, of all grains, fitted for use or ornament, valuable fruits, spices, and medicinal plants, are suffered to flourish and decay unnoticed around them. The cedars grow to a prodigious size, and, with other trees, spread their spurs or protrud-



THE CACAO-TREE AND FRUIT.

ing roots far around, often reaching 20 or 30 feet from the trunk, which is from 150 to 200 feet high. The ceiba, or wild cotton tree, is surpassed by none. The trunk of this elegant as well as giant vegetable swells in a few years so as to require ten or twelve men to embrace it with their arms. It produces a downy substance like silk, whence it derives its name, which is used to stuff pillows; and the wood, though lighter and more perishable than deal, is often carved into huge barges, or piraguas, by the natives, on account of the facility with which it is worked. The guayacan, a sort of iron-wood, is considered indestructible. The cacao, improperly called cocoa (the chocolate tree), is indigenous, and flourishes only under the shadow of larger trees called "madre de cacao."* The sarsaparilla and vanilla vines both grow wild in the bush, and shed their delicious fragrance around. The draco yields the drug called dragon's blood. What has been erroneously called balsam of Peru is found exclusively in Central America. The Palma Christi, or castor oil plant; the caoutchouc, or ule (the India-rubber, or elastic gum-tree); the guaco, considered an antidote to the bite of the worst snakes, as well as a cure for hydrophobia, and many other plants, from which valuable extracts are or might be made, grow wild and in great abundance.

Nor is the necessary aliment of man either scarce or of difficult production. Maize, or Indian corn, rice, and frejole, a nutritious kind of pulse which is very much used, yield, with scarcely any cultivation, three and often four crops a year, and that with five

* The mother of the cacao.



THE VANILLA.

hundred fold, or even greater increase, each harvest. These are for the natives the most necessary fruits of the earth, but not the only staple food. The plantain—substantial or luscious, as it is eaten green or ripe—the gelatinous cassada, or yuca, the farinaceous yam, and other alimentary roots, are in general use, with very many vegetables peculiar to the tropics ; and the bread fruit and bread nut trees, though but lately introduced, are found to thrive.

But besides these, the temperate regions yield all, or nearly all, those productions which are raised in Europe. Wheat and barley are cultivated sometimes by the side of the sugar cane, on the elevated plains; and the markets of the larger towns are supplied at once with the productions of torrid and of temperate climes.

The precious metals, together with quicksilver, copper, lead, iron, talc, litharge, and most other minerals that are of use, only await the labour and ingenuity of man to extract them from the bowels of the earth, and convert them into objects of convenience and beauty; and seams of coal, ochre, gypsum, sal-ammoniac, and wells of naphtha, are also ready to yield their valuable stores. Jasper, opal, and other precious stones, are also found, and pearl fisheries have long existed upon the coasts. In fine, there is no lack of anything that nature can bestow to sustain, to satisfy, and to delight. So abundant are the necessities of life, that none need want them : so profuse are the bounties of nature, that they are suffered to decay through neglect. The peach tree and the rose run wild on the borders of the orange grove, whose flowers and fruits are alike simultaneous and perennial; and the pine-apple, the mango, and the water-melon are preferred to the almond, the olive, and the grape. Such is the nature of the soil, that the exuberance of that wealth which rots upon its surface in the less populous parts of Central America, would amply clothe and satisfy with bread thousands of the sons of want who fill our streets and Unions, dispelling that squalid wretchedness which penury and desti-

tution have produced, and mitigating some of the woes which imbitter the lot of so many of our fellow-countrymen. It may be that the time is not far distant when many such will seek these fruitful shores, and, under wise direction, not only benefit themselves, but, while redeeming fertile valleys and plains from desolation, greatly bless the timid natives with higher arts of life, and with the example of morals purified by the sacred influence of evangelical truth.

Nor is the animal creation less multiform and prolific, though on a less gigantic scale. Earth, air, and water literally team with life, and greatly extend the resources of man. The mountain's side and the river's bed are alike trodden by the danta, or tapir,—the American elephant,—which, though small, is both strong and fierce. The puma, the leopard, the panther, and the tiger-cat, with others of



PINE-APPLE.

their kind, are destructive to cattle and to the numerous droves of warree, or wild boars, and herds of fallow deer, but not to man. Baboons and monkeys colonize the sycamore, or wild fig tree, on the borders of the streams. These bark in chorus at the dawn of day, and warn the boatman of approaching rain. Innumerable quadrupeds, some of them still unknown to the naturalist, animate the wastes, and prey upon each other; among them, the gibnet, or tepesquite, which resembles a huge guinea pig, is the most esteemed for food. The peccary and the Indian rabbit, which are plentiful,



THE OPOSSUM.

also make savoury meat. The armadillo, somewhat rare, is peculiarly delicate. The opossum, which, in size, appearance, and habits, seems to be about the medium between the rat and the kangaroo, is more destructive to domestic fowls than even the fox; and sloths, weasels, ant-eaters, and squirrels are

plentiful, whilst snakes, serpents, scorpions, and tarantulas, with other reptiles, infest the thicket, or lie concealed in holes and among dead leaves and rotten wood.

The feathered tribes, from the wild turkey, gorgeous and superb beyond the peacock, to the minute and glittering humming-bird, though for the most part wanting song, are decked in brightest hues, and not a few of them are as good for food as they are pleasant to the eye. The quesal, one of the most beautiful of birds, is found only in the province of *Quesaltenango*, and is therefore peculiar to Central



PARROTS.

America. The red and blue macaws fly in pairs at giddy heights across the streams, and rend the air with their screams. Flocks of parrots and parrots in clamorous feast devour the over-ripe fruit,

or spoil the planter's corn. The ringdove's note echoes through the wood; the whip-poor-will, co-cli-co, chul-pil-choc, who-you, and top-na-chic, startle by their strange cries the unaccustomed ear. The orupendula, or yellow-tail, suspends her flask-like nests by hundreds from the branches of one giant tree, near which the toucan (bill-bird), unconscious of his glories, sits demure. The stealthy bushman with his gun pursues the stately currassoa and the sober quam,—large birds affording goodly fare; but he has carefully to secrete the bones of the former, which, if eaten, must prove fatal to his dog. The eagle, the hawk, and the turkey-buzzard, or sopelote (a species of vulture—the unpaid scavenger of all the land), soar aloft, and sail in airy circles till they scent their prey, and give place only to the night-owl and the bat.

The streams, too, and the fresh and brackish lakes, abound with strange yet not unfrequently most graceful forms. The ponderous alligator stretches his lazy length upon some protruding trunk which the floods have borne down; and the amphibious iguana, the largest of the saurian or lizard tribe, basks in the sun on overhanging boughs. The finny myriads leap to catch the sportive flies, and are scarcely thinned by the many destroyers that prey upon them. These are, storks, flamingoes, white and black curlews, pelicans, spoonbills, kingfishers, and flocks of ducks and teal, which, flying to and fro, seem to darken the surface of the waters.

The buccatora and the hecateë, the river turtle, hie to the sand-bank, and deposit there the dainty

store of eggs, which man, or some less subtle foe, directed by the ruffled surface, may rifle soon. The manatee, or huge sea-cow, flounders in the lagoons and bays. The green and the hawksbill turtle, the latter of which yields the tortoise-shell, feed along the shores, or, with the snapper, baracouta, and Jew-fish, frequent the bars and mouths of rivers and the reef, which, like a submarine parterre, is decked with corals and sea-fans, conch-shells, soft sponge, and grassy weeds of forms and hues unnumbered.

More abundant and formidable than all, the tiny insect constitutes one of the inconveniences of life, particularly in uncleared lands, the temperate regions alone being exempt from their annoyance.

The mosquito, closely resembling the English summer gnat, is the most prevalent and hurtful, inflaming the skin, and goading to perpetual motion in order to escape its stings. Sand-flies, botlass, and cantharides, called tavano or doctor-fly, all inflict wounds more or less severe, and frequently repeated. The chingo, called jigger or negua, the waree-tic and the beef-worm, fasten upon the body or nestle beneath the skin. The wood-louse or white ant (termites), the red or fire ant, the wee-wee, the warrior ants, or marching army, and the sompope, are justly terrible; and many other kinds more diminutive, and less effectually armed, are troublesome to all, and become a special scourge to the uncleanly.

But there are not wanting insects of a more agreeable kind. The honey of the common and of the stingless bee flows from the natural hive in the trunks and branches of trees, and sometimes in

the wanderer who freely indulges in the human draught. Butterflies of great size and beauty were among the tropical plants; locusts, and a kind of grasshopper which unites in perfection the most promising colours, luxuriate on the superabundant vegetation. The chickarra a beetle not unlike a cockchafer, spins round the branches in the even and by the motion of its wings produces a humming sound which fills the air, and is heard at the distance of hundreds of yards. Several lanterns in the sky illuminate the bushes, and flit through the air when the curtains of the night close in.

In short the country, though not without its inconveniences, was in every respect before the cultivation of the soil and increase of population, is inferior to none in natural advantages and in the variety and wealth of its animal, vegetable, and mineral productions.

"But though we are in such kindness
The gods are still our masters."

Upon this thought of his goodness, it has hitherto been unhindered by the appropriation of its resources to the uses of true piety or devotion, or even, to any extent, to the purposes of that civilization which, while it refuses, cannot really improve society. Hitherto man has entailed only a curse upon its soil, and polluted its balmy atmosphere. Hitherto all its wealth has been abused and consumed upon wicked pleasures, and the Creator remains unacknowledged and unhonoured in its consecration to him.



CHAPTER II.

HISTORY AND FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

First discovery—Its state when discovered—Expedition of Cortez—Conquest of Guatemala by Alvarado—Guatemala in ancient times—City of Guatemala founded—Its situation—Destruction by a water volcano, then by a fire volcano.

CENTRAL AMERICA comprises the five states of Guatemala, San Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, along with British Honduras, consisting of Belize and the adjacent district, and the Bay Islands and Mosquito coast, which were, until lately, under British protection.

It was in Honduras that Columbus first planted his feet on the continent of America. In 1502, then sailing on his fourth voyage, he discovered the island of Guanaja (or Bonacca), which he named the Isle of Pines. From this island he descried to the southward the high mountains of the mainland, and, pursuing his course in that direction, on the 14th of August landed at a point which he called *Punta de Casinas* (now Cabo de Honduras), and formally took possession of the country on behalf of the crown of Spain. He subsequently coasted to the eastward, touching at the mouth of Rio Tinto, or Black River, and finally, after great delays and



COLUMBUS LANDING IN AMERICA.

dangers, reached a point where the coast, abruptly trending to the southward, formed a cape, to which, in gratitude for his safety, he gave the name of *Cabo Gracias á Dios*,—Cape Thanks to God. He

lost a boat with some sailors, in attempting to enter the great Cape, or Wanks River; which was, in consequence, called *Rio del Desastre*. From Cape Gracias he continued his voyage along what is now the Mosquito shore, called by him *Cariay*, to the Isthmus of Darien.

“At the period of the discovery of this country,” says Mr. Squier, “it was found in the occupation of two families of men, presenting in respect to each other the strongest points of contrast. Upon the high plateaus of the interior of the country, and upon the Pacific declivity of the continent, where the rains are comparatively light, the country open, and the climate relatively cool and salubrious, were found great and populous nations, far advanced in civilization, and inhabiting large and splendid cities. Upon the Atlantic declivity, on the other hand, among dense forests, nourished by constant rains into rank vigour, on low coasts, where marshes and lagoons sweltering under a fierce sun generated deadly miasmatic damps, were found savage tribes of men, without fixed abodes, living upon the natural fruits of the earth, and the precarious supplies of fishing and the chase, without religion, and with scarcely a semblance of social or political establishments.”

The Spaniards chiefly established themselves on the Pacific declivity. The bulk of the Spanish population at the present day exists on the Pacific slope of the continent, while on the Atlantic declivity the country is either uninhabited or sparsely occupied by Indian tribes, of which the number is wholly unknown.

Less than twenty years after the first visit of Columbus to Honduras, the conqueror of Mexico, Hernando Cortez, inspired by the accounts of the vast and populous kingdoms to the south, undertook an expedition into Honduras, then called Hibueras or Higueras. Starting from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, he boldly plunged into the vast and unknown wilderness. For two years he struggled among deep morasses, broad and almost impassable rivers, and high and desert mountains. At the end of that time he reached the point where Columbus had made his first landing in Honduras; and there, after receiving the submission of the neighbouring chiefs, he founded the ancient city, now the port of Truxillo.

The principal part of Guatemala was conquered by Don Pedro Alvarado in 1524, and other Spanish leaders about the same time invaded the countries now known as San Salvador and Nicaragua. In 1530 Alvarado received a commission as governor and captain-general of the kingdom of Guatemala. Till his death in 1541, he exercised authority over all the Spanish settlements and provinces. Guatemala continued to be the capital of Central America during all the time of Spanish rule.

The footsteps of the Spaniards in Guatemala as elsewhere were marked by bloodshed, misery, and oppression. "According to the historians of the Conquest of Guatemala," says Roberts, "that country when first invaded by the Spaniards, under Don Pedro Alvarado, was flourishing and populous, to a degree which, compared with the present small number and wretched condition of the aborigines,

leads the mind to reflect, with astonishment and abhorrence, upon the massacres, cruelties, and privations, by which their intrepid, but bigoted and relentless conquerors, reduced the natives to their present state; for, instead of an uncultivated and not half peopled country, containing, as at the present day, two or three poor cities, towns and villages, inhabited by a few thousands of Spanish *religieuse* and Creole descendants of Spanish adventurers, with groups of naked and degraded Indians scattered over the face of the country, living in filth and idleness, under the shelter of wretched huts, or travelling in droves, loaded like beasts of burden, on the one hand,—and a comparatively small number of free and independent tribes, remnants of former kingdoms, speaking different languages, scattered along the sea-coast, or among the mountains, on the other,—we, at the time of the first invasion, read of no less than *thirty different nations* of Indians in Central America, congregated in wealthy cities, in a state of prosperity and civilization, their kings and chiefs possessing sumptuous palaces and houses, great riches, and all the apparatus of regular governments. It is asserted that the Central American Indians of the present day still use twenty-six of the ancient languages, namely, Quiché, Kachiquel, Zutugel, Mam, Pocomam, Pipil, or Nahuatl, Populucan, Sinca, Mexican, Chorti, Alaquilac, Caichi, Poconchi, Ixil, Zotzil, Pzandal, Chapaneque, Zoque, Coxoh, Chaniabal, Chol, Uzpanteca, Lenca, Aquacateca, Maya, and Quecchi.

The dress that the noble Indians wore was of white cotton dyed or stained with different colours,

the use of which was prohibited to the other ranks. This vestment consisted of a shirt and white breeches, decorated with fringes; over these was drawn another pair of breeches, reaching to the knees, and ornamented with a species of embroidery. The legs were bare; the feet protected by sandals, fastened over the instep and at the heel by thongs of leather; the sleeves of the shirt were looped above the elbow with a blue or red band; the hair was worn long, and tressed behind with a cord of the colour used upon the sleeves, and terminating in a tassel, which was a distinction peculiar to the great captains; the waist was girded by a piece of cloth of various colours, fastened in a knot before; over the shoulders was thrown a white mantle, ornamented with figures of birds, lions, and other decorations of cords and fringe. The ears and lower lip were pierced to receive star-shaped pendants of gold or silver. The insignia of office or dignity were carried in the hand.

“According to Torquemada, and the historian Fuentes, one of these ancient cities, namely, *Utatlan*, the capital of the king of Quiché, was, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, so considerable, that it contained a population probably equal in number to the whole present Indians of Central America; for, to oppose the Spaniards, it alone produced seventy-two thousand fighting men: and, in proof of its progress in civilization, one of its institutions was a seminary where, under seventy or eighty tutors, five or six thousand youths were maintained and educated at the king's expense.

“The present town of *Santa Cruz del Quiché* is said

to be founded upon or near the place where it stood ; but so complete has been the destruction of all the remains of former greatness in this part of the world, that the site of many ancient cities, nearly equal in extent to the one mentioned, cannot now be traced, or with any degree of certainty pointed out.”*


The old city of Guatemala, now called *La Antigua*, was founded by Alvarado in 1524. The locality chosen for its site was a magnificent valley, elevated from 5000 to 6000 feet above the level of the sea, lying between two majestic volcanoes, which rise at least 10,000 feet above the valley, and may well be ranked among the grandest objects in the physical world. The one called *El Volcan de Aqua*, or the *water* volcano, is an almost perfect cone, of proportions at once vast and symmetrical. It is covered with verdant forests nearly to its summit. The other, called *El Volcan de Fuego*, or the *fire* volcano, consists of several irregular peaks, some of them covered with ashes and lava. From one of these a light column of smoke is invariably seen to ascend into the pure heavens above.

The valley lying between the bases of these gigantic volcanoes is flanked by lesser but bold ranges of mountains. To its unrivalled scenery it superadds a mild temperature, a serene sky, luxuriant and unfading vegetation, and abounding streams, some of them chalybeate, some very cold, some tepid, and others quite warm, constituting a whole so unusually beautiful and agreeable as almost to realize a dream of earthly paradise.

* Roberts' Narrative of Voyages and Excursions on the East Coast and in the Interior of Central America, p. 28.

For a long time the capital city continued to occupy its commanding position ; but, in the midst of outward advantages, it was full of oppression, superstition, and licentiousness; and, as a consequence, was repeatedly and terribly scourged. In 1526 an insurrection of the Kachiquel Indians, provoked by the exactions of an exorbitant covetousness, was most disastrous to the foreign inhabitants, and resulted in a second sanguinary subjugation of the Indians. On the 11th of September 1541, after violent and protracted rains, the city was laid waste by the sudden fall of an immense body of water issuing from the crater of the extinct volcano,—ever since, from this circumstance, known as the *Water Volcano*. What had been a lake suspended 10,000 or 12,000 feet above the city, bursting its barriers, impetuously dashed from the summit, carrying along with it trees, stones, and huge fragments of rocks, and sweeping away houses, churches, convents, and even whole streets, with the awful accompaniment of violent shocks of earthquake, and terrific subterraneous noises. Many of the guilty inhabitants were buried under the ruins; and among others who lost their lives was the female governor, the relict of the founder, Alvarado.

After this event the city was rebuilt about three miles further from the still volcano, and consequently just so much nearer to the active one. Here new calamities followed each other with fearful rapidity and continuity. The small-pox and other epidemic scourges decimated the population. Violent and repeated shocks of earthquake overthrew the houses, and especially the public buildings, crushing the



inhabitants beneath them. No fewer than ten several epochs are enumerated in the history of the well-nigh innumerable earthquakes with which this devoted city has been visited, as marking only the *most notable* shocks and devastations. The ruin wrought on these occasions defies description. Ashes and smoke from the volcano have at times obscured the atmosphere, so as to make lights necessary at noon-day; or, worse still, the crater has vomited forth terrific flames day and night for weeks or even months together. The very crests of the mountains were torn off, and deep chasms rent in the surface of the plains. Fierce lions, as the historian calls them, issuing from the jungle on the mountain sides, more than once preyed greedily upon the people, as well as on their cattle; and pestilence, tornadoes, earthquakes (but never famine), visited them again and again till the year 1773, when the ruin of the city was consummated by a series of vibrations and undulations of the earth that left but little standing erect, and that little irreparably injured. Thus manifestly was the hand of God stretched out against this city. Whether it was most on account of its superstitions or of its oppressions and crimes, we have no evidence by which to determine; but the appalling facts themselves plainly indicate a moral object as well as a physical cause.

In 1777 the inhabitants of the ruined city were required by proclamation to leave it within a year, and remove to the new city, founded in a situation of greater safety. This command was never fully obeyed—several thousands of the inhabitants still preferring to linger among the ruins of their dwellings.

The colonial policy of Spain was characterized by selfishness, despotism, and cruelty. The natives were enslaved and cruelly treated—over-worked and often tortured, to compel them to supply gold to their cruel masters. The country was governed by arrogant nobles and haughty favourites of the Court of Spain, as well as by tyrants more cruel still—the priests and monks, who, like birds or beasts of prey, invariably followed the track of blood in the wake of her desolating armies.

One of the instruments put into the hands of these priestly emissaries, in order to aid the purposes of the Court, was the fearful agency of the unholy Inquisition—an institution which stands charged with the guilt of consuming in its fires no fewer than 5,000,000 of men.* A power so unlimited and irresponsible could not fail to be applied to the private objects and ends of the individuals who wielded it. This abominable tribunal had its usual accompaniments of secret dungeons, &c., some of which are still accessible to the curious, in the city of Guatemala.

Popery—that “mystery of iniquity” which assimilated with Druidism in Britain and Gaul, and with Polytheism in Rome—which could accommodate itself and mingle with any form of false worship—lost none of its characteristic flexibility in Central America. The heathen feasts and rites were perpetuated under Christian names, and the holy name of our Lord and the incidents of his holy life were blasphemously used as spectacles like stage plays, to amuse and allure the heathen.

* Speech of Victor Hugo in the National Assembly of France, on the law of Public Instruction, January 1850.

The heathen idols were exchanged for idols named after the Virgin Mary, the apostles, or saints of Romish creation. It was found that the Indians revered the wonderful power of gunpowder; so guns were fired and sky-rockets set off, as an important element in their religious worship. This is still the universal practice in Central America; and English *dolls*, to be dressed as images for worship, still form a part of the trade to these countries.

By such means of attraction, aided by persecution when necessary, the poor Indian was flattered or forced into the adoption of Romish names and forms, in addition to his old belief; and thus the priests of Rome gained an influence like that of their predecessors the heathen priests, and even greater. The most fertile valleys and the more temperate plains were no sooner subdued than they were infested with monastic establishments; and the conquests so fiercely achieved by the sword and the mysterious fire-arms of the pale warrior were retained in the more rapacious grasp, and consolidated by the subtler influence, of the crafty ecclesiastic. The best situations for settlement were seized by the monks, who soon possessed a great part of the property of the country, and employed slaves to work for them.

The civil and military functionaries of Spain seem to have been as selfish and greedy as the priests. With but a very few exceptions, all, both priests and rulers, united their influences to lower and degrade the poor Indians, who were treated with the most relentless tyranny.

This could not endure for ever. The oppressed

people rose at last, and after a struggle succeeded in throwing off the Spanish yoke, in the year 1821. At first it united with the Republic of Mexico ; but after a hard struggle it became again a separate government, and eventually the Confederation of the Five States was formed.

About 1826 the confederation was dissolved, and each of the states claimed to be sovereign and independent. Each chose its own president and had its own capital ; and consequently the country continued weak, and unable to profit by the natural advantages which it possesses. It is still suffering from the evils of Popery, as the priests are the determined enemies of light and liberty, and continue to have great power with the ignorant and superstitious Indians. To this cause most of the calamities of Central America may be traced ; and it can never prosper till the Bible, the lamp of life and the true charter of freedom, is freely circulated among the people. It is the interest as well as the duty of Britain to aid in forming, *by this means*, a free, united, and friendly people, to guard this highway of the world where the two great oceans meet.

The present form of government in all the states is very similar. That of Costa Rica is said to be the best. It is thus described by Mr. Trollope, who visited that country in 1859 :—

“And now I must say a word or two about the form of government in this country. It is a republic, of course, arranged on the model plan. A president is elected for a term of years,—in this case six. He has ministers who assist him in his government, and whom he appoints ; and there is a House of

Congress, elected, of course, by the people, who make the laws. The president merely carries them out, and so Utopia is realized.

"Utopia might perhaps be realized in such republics, or at any rate the realization might not be so very distant as it is at present, were it not that in all of them the practice, by some accident, runs so far away from the theory.

"In Costa Rica, Don Juan Rafael Mora, familiarly called Juanito, is now the president, having been not long since re-elected (?) for the third time. We read in the *Gazette* on Tuesday morning that the election had been carried on Saturday ;—and that was all we knew about it ! It is thus they elect a president in Costa Rica ; no one knows anything of the affair, or troubles his head with the matter. If any one suggested a rival president, he would be banished ! But such a thing is not thought of ; no note is taken as to five or six years. At some period that pleases him the president says that he has been re-elected, and he is re-elected. Who cares ? Why not Juanito as well as any one else ? Only it is a pity he will not let us sell our dulce to the distillers !

"The president's salary is three thousand dollars a year ; an income which, for so high a position, is moderate enough. But then a further sum of six thousand dollars is added to this for official entertainment. The official entertainments, however, are not numerous. I was informed that he usually gives one party every year. He himself still lives in his private house, and still keeps a shop, as he did before he was president. It must be remembered that

there is no aristocracy in this country above the aristocracy of the shop-keepers.

"As far as I could learn, the Congress is altogether a farce. There is a congress or collection of men sent up from different parts of the country, some ten or dozen of whom sit occasionally round a table in the great hall; but they neither debate, vote, nor offer opinions. Some one man, duly instructed by the president, lets them know what law is to be made or altered, and the law is made or altered. Should any member of Congress make himself disagreeable, he would, as a matter of course, be banished; taken, that is, to Punta-arenas, and there told to shift for himself. Now this enforced journey to Punta-arenas does not seem to be more popular among the Costa Ricans than a journey to Siberia is among the Russians.

"Such is the model Republic of Central America, —admitted, I am told, to be the best administered of the cluster of republics there established. This, at any rate, may certainly be said for it, that life and property are safe. They are safe for the present, and will probably remain so, unless the filibusters make their way into the neighbouring state of Nicaragua in greater numbers, and with better leaders than they have hitherto had.

"And it must be told to the credit of the Costa Ricans, that it was by them and their efforts that the invasion of Walker and the filibusters into Central America was stopped and repelled. These enterprising gentlemen, the filibusters, landed on the coast of Nicaragua, having come down from California. Here they succeeded in getting possession of a large portion of the country, that portion being

the most thickly populated, and the richest; many of the towns they utterly destroyed, and among them Granada, the capital. It seems that at this time the whole state of Nicaragua was paralyzed, and unable to strike any blow in its own defence. Having laid waste the upper or more northern country, Walker came down south as far as Rivas, a town still in Nicaragua but not far removed from the borders of Costa Rica. His intention, doubtless, was to take possession of Costa Rica, so that he might command the whole transit across the isthmus.

"But at Rivas he was attacked by the soldiery of Costa Rica, under the command of a brother of Don Juan Mora. This was in 1856, and it seems that some three thousand Costa Ricans were taken as far as Rivas. But few of them returned. They were attacked by cholera, and what with that, and want, and the intense heat, to which of course must be added what injuries the filibusters could do them, they were destroyed, and a remnant only came back.

"But in 1857 the different states of Central America joined themselves in a league, with the object of expelling these filibusters. I do not know that either of the three northern states sent any men to Rivas, and the weight of the struggle again fell on Costa Rica. The Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans together invested Rivas, in which five hundred filibusters, under Walker, for some time maintained themselves. These men were reduced to great straits, and might no doubt have been taken bodily. But the Central Americans also had their difficulties to contend with. They did not agree very well together, and they had but slender means of supporting them-

selves. It ended in a capitulation, under which Walker and his associates were to walk out with their arms and all the honours of war ; and by which, moreover, it was stipulated that the five hundred were to be sent back to America at the expense of the Central American States. The states, thinking no doubt that it was good economy to build a golden bridge for a flying enemy, did so send them back ; and in this manner for a while Central America was freed from the locusts.

“Such was the capitulation of Rivas ; a subject on which all Costa Ricans now take much pride to themselves. And, indeed, much honour is due to them in this matter, for they evinced a spirit in the business, when their neighbours of Nicaragua failed to do so. They soon determined that the filibusters would do them no good,—could indeed by no possibility do them anything but harm ; consequently they resolved to have the first blow, and they struck it manfully, though not so successfully as might have been wished.

“The total population of Central America is, I believe, about two millions, while that of Costa Rica does not exceed two hundred thousand. Of the five states, Guatemala has by far the largest number of inhabitants ; and indeed the town of Guatemala may still be regarded as the capital of all the isthmus territories. They fabricate there not only priests and wax images, but doctors and lawyers, and all those expensive luxuries for the production of which the air of a capital is generally considered necessary. The President of Guatemala is, they say, an Indian nearly of pure descent ; his name is Carrera.



CHAPTER III.

GUATEMALA.

Description of the State of Guatemala—Travelling in Guatemala—
Perils and adventures—A strange repast—Haciendas of Guatemala
—Lassoing the cattle—Sugar hacienda—The cochineal insect.

THE broad elevated belt of Guatemala lies between the Isthmus of Chinquimala and that of Tehuantepec. It spreads out to the last, and forms the high but narrow table-land on the Peninsula of Yucatan, which terminates at Cape Catoche, and which is bounded by high mountains and terraces along the Gulf of Honduras. The table-land of Guatemala consists of undulating verdant plains of great extent, of the absolute height of 5000 feet, fragrant with flowers. In the southern part of the table-land the cities of Old and New Guatemala are situated, twelve miles apart. The portion of the plain on which the new city stands is bounded on the west by the three volcanoes of Pacaya, del Fuego, and el' Agua. These, rising from 7000 to 10,000 feet above the plain, lie close to the new city on the west, and form a scene of wonderful boldness and beauty. The Volcano el' Agua, at the foot of which Old Guatemala stands, is a perfect

cone, verdant to its summit, which occasionally pours forth torrents of boiling water and stones. The old city has been twice destroyed by it, and is now nearly deserted on account of violent earthquakes. The Volcano del Fuego generally emits smoke from one of its peaks, and the Volcano of Pacayo is only occasionally active. The wide grassy plains are cut by deep valleys to the north, where the high land of Guatemala ends in parallel ridges of mountains, called the Cerro Pelado, which run from east to west along the ninety-fourth meridian, filling half the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, which is 140 miles broad, and unites the table-land of Guatemala with that of Mexico.

Though there are large savannahs on the high plains of Guatemala, there are also magnificent primeval forests, as the name of the country implies,

Guatemala, in the Mexican language, signifying a place covered with trees. The banks of the Polochic, and of the Rio de la Papian, or Usumasinta, which rises in the Alpine lake of Lacandon, and flows over the table-land to the Gulf of Mexico, are beautiful beyond description.

The State of Guatemala is by far the most extensive of the five. It includes a considerable and populous highland district to the north, called Los Altos de Quezaltenango; and to the eastward vast territories, such as those of Vera Paz and El Peten, which are but thinly inhabited. Altogether it occupies full one-third of the whole country. It has also the largest population, and far surpasses the other states in importance. Its growing trade is even now considerable. It is principally carried on

RIVER POLOCHIC—GUATEMALA.



with the English. The chief export, which is cochineal, amounted in 1846 to 9037 *surroneas*, or bales of 150 lbs. each, valued at £211,804, 13s. 9d.

The surface of the country is very irregular. There are high mountains and elevated table-lands; but these are divided and broken by deep and almost impassable ravines. "The mountains of Central America," says the author of "Mitla," "particularly at the approach to Guatemala, are marked by sudden chasms, fathomless rents, capricious peaks, —a scattered, unconnected, and varied chaos of heights and depths, bearing the unmistakable aspect of having been caused by the most violent and sudden paroxysms of volcanic action."

It may easily be imagined that travelling is difficult in a country like this. Mr. Stephens gives a very amusing account of the many perils and adventures of his journey from the sea-port of Yzabal (or Izabal) to the city of Guatemala, of which the following is a specimen :—

"At daylight the muleteers commenced loading for the passage of 'the Mountain.' At seven o'clock the whole caravan, consisting of nearly a hundred mules and twenty or thirty muleteers, was fairly under way. Our immediate party consisted of five mules; two for Mr. Catherwood and myself, one for Augustin (his servant), and two for luggage; besides which we had four Indian carriers. If we had been consulted, perhaps at that time we should have scrupled to use men as beasts of burden; but the arrangements had all been made for us. The loads were arranged so as to have on one side a

flat surface. The Indians sat on the ground with their backs against the surface; passed a strap across the forehead, which supported the load, and adjusting it on their shoulders, with the aid of a staff, or the hand of a by-stander, rose upon their feet. It seemed cruel; but before much sympathy could be expended upon them, they were out of sight.

"At eight o'clock Mr. Catherwood and I mounted, each armed with a brace of pistols and a large hunting-knife, which we carried in a belt around the body; besides which, afraid to trust it in other hands, I had a mountain barometer slung over my shoulder. Augustin carried pistols and sword; our principal muleteer, who was mounted, carried a machete,* and a pair of spurs with rowels two inches long on his naked heels; and two other muleteers accompanied us on foot, each carrying a gun."

After leaving the town of Yzabal, and "passing a few straggling houses, which constituted the suburbs, we entered upon a marshy plain sprinkled with shrubs and small trees, and in a few minutes were in an unbroken forest. At every step the mules sank to their fetlocks in mud, and very soon we came to great puddles and mud-holes. As we advanced the shade of the trees became thicker, the holes larger and deeper, and roots rising two or three feet above the ground crossed the path in every direction. I gave the barometer to the muleteer, and had as much as I could do to keep myself in the saddle. All conversation was at an end, and we kept as close as we could to the track of the

* A short blade, everywhere in use, and called "*machete*," from a Greek word for fighter.

muleteer; when he descended into a mud-hole, and crawled out, the entire legs of his mule blue with mud, we followed and came out as blue as he.

“The caravan of mules, which had started before us, was but a short distance ahead, and in a little while we heard ringing through the woods the loud shout of the muleteers and the sharp crack of the whip. We overtook them at the bank of a stream which broke rapidly over a stony bed. The whole caravan was moving up the bed of the stream; the water was darkened by the shade of the overhanging trees. The muleteers, without shirts, and with their large trousers rolled up to the thighs and down from the waistband, were scattered among the mules; one was chasing a stray beast; a second darting at one whose load was slipping off; a third lifting up one that had fallen; another with his foot braced against a mule's side, straining at the girth;—all shouting, screaming, and lashing; the whole a mass of inextricable confusion, and presenting a scene almost terrific.

“For five long hours we were dragged through mud-holes, squeezed in gulleys, knocked against trees, and tumbled over roots; every step required care and great physical exertion; and, withal, I felt that our inglorious epitaph might be, ‘Tossed over the head of a mule, brained by the trunk of a mahogany-tree, and buried in the mud of the Mico Mountain.’ We attempted to walk, but the rocks and roots were so slippery, the mud-holes so deep, and the ascents and descents so steep, that it was impossible to continue.

“The mules were only half loaded, and even then

several broke down ; the lash could not move them, and scarcely one passed over without a fall. Of our immediate party, mine fell first. Finding that I could not save her with the rein, by an exertion that strained every nerve, I lifted myself from off her back, and flung clear of roots and trees, but not of mud : and I had an escape from a worse danger ; my dagger fell from its sheath and stood upright, with the handle in the mud,—a foot of naked blade ! Mr. Catherwood was thrown with such violence, that for a few moments, feeling the helplessness of our condition, I was horror-struck. Long before this he had broken silence to utter an exclamation which seemed to come from the bottom of his heart,—that, if he had known of this ‘ mountain,’ I might have come to Central America alone. Shortly after, Augustin’s mule fell backward. He kicked his feet out of the stirrups, and attempted to slide off behind ; but the mule rolled, and caught him with his left leg under, and, but for his kicking, I should have thought that every bone in his body was broken. The mule kicked worse than he, but they rose together, and without any damage, except that the mud, which before lay upon them in spots, was now formed into a regular plaster.”

So the party toiled on to the top of the mountain, and there they found a clearing, made by the benighted muleteers who had rested there. Heaps of ashes, and the burned stumps of wood, marked the places where they had made their fires. There they dismounted, and would have stayed to eat, but there was no water, so after a few minutes’ rest they resumed their journey.



DESCENT OF THE MOUNTAIN.

“The descent was as bad as the ascent; and instead of stopping to let the mules breathe, as they had done in ascending, the muleteers seemed anxious to determine in how short a time they could tumble

them down the mountain. In one of the muddiest defiles we were shut up by the falling of a mule before, and the crowding upon us of all behind; and, at the first convenient place, we stopped until the whole caravan had passed. The carefulness of the mules was extraordinary. For an hour I watched the movements of the one before me. At times he put one of his fore feet on a root or stone, and tried it as a man would; sometimes he drew his fore legs out of a bed of mud from the shoulders, and sometimes it was one continued alternation of sinking and pulling out.

"This is the great high road to the city of Guatemala, which has always been a place of distinction in Spanish America. Almost all the travel and merchandise from Europe passes over it; and our guide said that the reason it was so bad was because it was traversed by so many mules. In some countries this would be a reason for making it better, but at that time the people of Guatemala did not trouble themselves about improvements. Since then the Constituent Assembly has imposed a tax on each bale of merchandise that passes, for the improvement of the road.

"In two hours," continues Mr. Stephens, "we reached a wild river or mountain torrent, foaming and breaking over its rocky bed, and shaded by large trees. It was called El Arroyo del Muerto, or 'stream of the dead.' The muleteers were already distributed on the rocks or under the shade of the trees, eating their frugal meal of corn-cakes; the mules were in the river, or scattered along the bank; and we selected a large tree, which spread its

branches over us like a roof, and so near the stream that we could dip our drinking-cups into the water.

“We sat on the ground, Turkish fashion, with a vacant space between us. Augustin placed before us a well-filled napkin; and as we dipped water from the clear stream by our side, a spirit of other days came over us, and we spoke in contempt of railroads, cities, and hotels; but oh, publicans, you were avenged! We unrolled the napkin, and the scene that presented itself was too shocking even for the strongest nerves. We had provided bread for three days, eggs boiled hard, and two roasted fowls for as long as they might last. Augustin had forgotten salt, but he had placed in the napkin a large paper of gunpowder as an adventure of his own. The paper was broken, and the bread, fowls, and eggs were thoroughly seasoned with this new condiment! All the beauty of the scene, all our equanimity, everything but our tremendous appetites left us in a moment. Country taverns rose up before us; and we, who had been so amiable, abused Augustin, and wished him the whole poisonous seasoning in his own body. We could not pick out enough to satisfy hunger. It was, perhaps, the most innocent way of tasting gunpowder, but even so, it was a bitter pill. We picked and made excavations for immediate use, but the rest of our store was lost.”

The *mesones* or inns were few, but the travellers seem to have been often hospitably received at the *haciendas* or country farms. These haciendas are in general either cattle farms, or establishments for the

cultivation of the sugar-cane, or of the cactus plant, on which the cochineal insect feeds.


Mr. Stephens thus describes a visit to a cattle farm :—

“I rode to Naranjo, a small hacienda of the Aycinena family, about seven miles from the city. Beyond the walls all was beautiful, and in the palmy days of Guatemala the Aycinenas rolled to the Naranjo in an enormous carriage, full of carving and gilding, in the style of the grandees of Spain, which now stands in the court-yard of the family house as a memorial of better days. We entered by a large gate into a road upon their land, undulating and ornamented with trees, and by a large artificial lake, made by damming up several streams. We rode round the borders of the lake, and entered a large cattle-yard, in the centre of which, on the side of a declivity, stood the house, a strong stone structure, with a broad piazza in front, and commanding a beautiful view of the volcanoes of the Antigua.

“The hacienda was only valuable from its vicinity to Guatemala, being what would be called at home a country seat; and contained only seven thousand acres of land, about seventy mules, and seven hundred head of cattle. It was the season for marking and numbering the cattle, and two of the Señores Aycinena were at the hacienda to superintend the operations. The cattle had been caught and brought in; but, as I had never seen the process of lassoing, after dinner a hundred head, which had been kept up two days without food, were let loose into a field two or three miles in circumference. Eight men

were mounted, with iron spurs an inch long on their naked heels, and each with a lasso in hand, which consisted of an entire cow's hide cut into a single cord about twenty yards long. One end was fastened to the horse's tail, which was first wrapped in leaves to prevent its being lacerated; the rest was wound into a coil, and held by the rider in his right hand, resting on the pommel of the saddle. The cattle had all dispersed. We placed ourselves on an elevation commanding a partial view of the field, and the riders scattered in search of them. In a little while thirty or forty rushed past, followed by the riders at full speed, and very soon were out of sight. We must either lose the sport or follow; and in one of the doublings, taking particularly good care to avoid the throng of furious cattle and headlong riders, I drew up to the side of two men who were chasing a single ox, and followed over hill, through brush, bush, and under-wood. One rider threw his lasso beautifully over the horns of the ox, and then turned his horse; while the ox, bounding to the length of the lasso, and without shaking horse or rider, pitched headlong to the ground.

"At this moment a herd swept by, with the whole company in full pursuit. A large yellow ox separated from the rest, and all followed him. For a mile he kept ahead, doubled, and dodged, but the horsemen crowded him down toward the lake; and, after an ineffectual attempt to bolt, he rushed into the water. Two horsemen followed and drove him out, and gave him a start, but in a few moments the lasso whizzed over his head, and, while horse and rider stood like marble, the ox again came with a





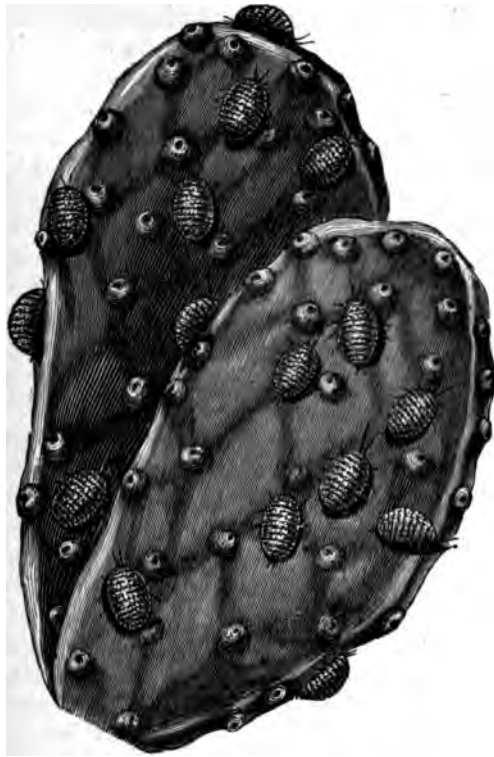
LASSING A WILD OX.

plunge to the ground. The riders scattered, and one horse and rider rolled over in such a way, that I thought every bone in his body was broken; but the sport was so exciting that I, who at the beginning was particularly careful to keep out of harm's

way, felt very much disposed to have my own horse's tail tied up and take a lasso in my hand. The effect of the sport was heightened by the beauty of the scene, with the great volcanoes of Agua and Fuego towering above us, and toward evening throwing a deep shade over the plain. It was nearly dark when we returned to the house. With that refinement of politeness which I believe is exclusively Spanish, the gentlemen escorted us some distance on our road. At dark we reached Guatemala."

At another time Mr. Stephens visited a hacienda where the sugar cane and cactus plant were cultivated. He says—"We turned into the hacienda of Señor Vidaurre. In the yard were four oxen grinding sugar cane, and behind was his *nopal*, or cochineal plantation, one of the largest in the Antigua. The plant is a species of cactus, set out in rows like Indian corn; and, at the time I speak of, it was about four feet high. On every leaf was pinned with a thorn a piece of cane, in the hollow of which were thirty or forty insects. These insects cannot move, but breed, and the young crawl out and fasten upon the leaf. When they have once fixed, they never move. A light film gathers over them, and as they feed, the leaves become mildewed and white. At the end of the dry season some of the leaves are cut off and hung up in a storehouse for seed; the insects are brushed off from the rest and dried, and are then sent abroad to minister to the luxuries and elegancies of civilized life, and enliven with their bright colours the drawing-rooms of London and Paris."

"There are two sorts or varieties of cochineal,"




BRANCH OF CACTUS WITH COCHINEAL INSECTS.

says Mr. M'Culloch; "the best or domesticated, which the Spaniards call *grana fina*, or 'fine grain;' and the wild, which they call *grana sylvestra*. The former is nearly twice as large as the latter; probably because its size has been improved by the favourable effects of human care, and of a more copious and suitable nourishment, derived solely

from the *cactus cochinellifer*, during many generations. Wild cochineal is collected six times in the year; but that which is cultivated is only collected thrice during the same period. The insects, of which there are about 70,000 in a pound, being detached from the plants on which they feed by a blunt knife, are put into bags, and dipped in boiling water to kill them, after which they are dried in the sun. Cochineal is principally used in the dyeing of scarlet, crimson, and other esteemed colours. The watery infusion is of a violet crimson; the alcoholic of a deep crimson; and the alkaline of a deep purple, or rather violet hue. It is exported in bags, each containing about 200 lbs., and has the appearance of small, dry, shrivelled, rugose berries or seeds, of a deep brown, purple, or mulberry colour, with a white matter between the wrinkles."

The sole possession of the cochineal insect was at one time an object of jealous care with the government of the Spanish colonies; and so highly was it valued by other nations, that the East India Company offered a reward of £6000 sterling to any one who should be so fortunate as to introduce it into their dominions. That object has been effected, and cochineal is now cultivated in many countries.

When M. Von Tempsky visited Guatemala, the export of cochineal was not one-third of what it used to be in former times—the harvest not having been favourable for some years. The insects are very delicate. They are apt to be destroyed by early rains; and the smallest awkwardness in hand-



ling them ruptures their skin, and sheds their purple blood. The lower classes suffer much from the failure of the cochineal, as a number of people are employed in tending these insects.

It seems strange that a creature much resembling a bug in form, and not so large, should be of so much importance to numbers of people; and that the vanity of others should be excited by so small a cause as wearing robes dyed in this insect's blood!

"In the Bible the body is said to be more than raiment. But many people still read the Bible Hebrew-wise—backward; and thus the general conviction now is, that raiment is more than the body. There is so much to gaze and stare at in the dress, one's eyes are quite dazzled and weary, and can hardly pierce through to that which is clothed upon."

"Tis the mind that makes the body rich;
And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
So Honour peereth in the meanest habit. .
What! is the Jay more precious than the lark,
Because his feathers are more beautiful?
Or is the adder better than the eel,
Because his painted skin contents the eye?
Oh no, good Kate; neither art thou the worse
For this poor furniture and mean array."

SHAKESPEARE.



CHAPTER IV.

THE CITY OF GUATEMALA.

General appearance of the city of Guatemala—Houses—Vehicles—
 The people and their various costumes—Mesones—The public
 dining-room—The earthquake—Los Altos—Quezaltenango—
 Indian communities—Santa Catarina—Indian dress and manners
 —A journey by moonlight—First view of the Pacific Ocean.

THE city of Guatemala is not only the capital of the province of that name; it may also be considered the chief city of Central America. All accounts agree in representing its situation as very beautiful. Mr. Stephens thus describes his first view of it :—

“Late in the afternoon, as I was ascending a small eminence, two immense volcanoes stood up before me, seeming to scorn the earth, and towering to the heavens. They were the great volcanoes of Agua and Fuego, 40 miles distant, and nearly 15,000 feet high,—wonderfully grand and beautiful. In a few moments the great plain of Guatemala appeared in view, surrounded by mountains, and in the centre of it the city, a mere speck on the vast expanse, with churches, and convents, and numerous turrets, cupolas, and steeples, and still, as if the spirit of peace rested upon it; with no storied asso-

ciations, but, by its own beauty, creating an impression on the mind of a traveller which can never be effaced. I dismounted, and tied my mule. As yet the sun lighted up the roofs and domes of the city, giving a reflection so dazzling that I could only look at them by stealth. By degrees its disc touched the top of the Volcano del Agua; slowly the whole orb sank behind it, illuminating the background with an atmosphere fiery red. A rich golden cloud rolled up its side, and rested on the top; and while I gazed the golden hues disappeared, and the glory of the scene was gone."

"The general appearance of the town," says M. Von Tempsky, "with its shining white houses, on a wide and breezy table-land, all gay with the rich green of its turf carpet, is exceedingly attractive. Numerous spires mounting towards a serene and azure sky, some milk-white, others grey and venerable-looking, relieve the long, rectangular streets and squares from their platitude. The whole atmosphere of this plateau is transparent, mellow, and inspiring. From the deep chasms that traverse the plateau in most directions a rich growth of trees lift their foliage above the even sward, which is bordered only by long curves of distant forest, beyond which airy mountains form the limits of the landscape, and blend heaven and earth together."

The houses, with few exceptions, are confined to the ground floor, and are generally built of stone and clay mingled together. The walls are six or even eight feet in thickness, on account of the frequent shocks of earthquakes. Two, three, or four rows of spacious and lofty rooms, built round a

court, and cloistered inwardly with a flat-roofed gallery called "azotea," supported upon rows of pilasters, form the bulk of their dwellings; which are evidently Moorish in their plan and arrangements. A ponderous portico, or "saguan," with folding gates, is the only entrance into the first "patio," or yard, formed by the rows of rooms. This generally contains a running fountain and a neat tank of water, and is often tastefully adorned with flowers, among which the rose, so seldom seen in tropical climates, holds a prominent place. The inner courts, to the number of two, three, or even four, are surrounded by the secondary rooms and out-houses, among which is the kitchen, the only part of a house needing a chimney. Beyond these are spacious stables, poultry-yards, and small orchards, where the fig, the orange, and the peach-tree grow side by side, or are intertwined with the tendrils of the passion-flower, which mingles its delicious fruits (the granadilla) with theirs, or hangs it upon the walls. These vast premises fill up the space enclosed by the "manzana;" which, in the case of the highest class, is entirely taken up by two or three such mansions. The appearance of the dwellings from the street is sombre. The surface of the long white walls is broken by few windows, and these are surrounded by a heavy iron balcony, the bars of which are secured above in the form of a cage, so as entirely to preclude ingress or egress; the whole presenting much the appearance of a convent, or the antiquated dwelling of some wealthy proprietor in a district infested by banditti.

Vehicles are by no means common. An old family

coach, drawn by four mules, now and then rumbles heavily over the rather rough but regular pavement, and shakes the ground. These are, in form and ornament, such as are seen in paintings of the fourteenth century; or, with less carving and gilding, somewhat like the state equipage of the Lord Mayor of London. The few carts used are roughly made, with massive wooden wheels, and not unfrequently drawn by oxen, yoked together by the horns. A light phaeton or chaise, imported from Europe, may occasionally be seen; but all wheeled vehicles are confined to the streets of the capital, and the roads in its immediate vicinity, as the roads elsewhere, and the nature of the country, will not admit of their use.

Droves of mules and companies of muscular Indians, bearing to and fro upon their backs burdens, consisting of "seroons" of cochineal, bales of Manchester goods, cases of French silks, &c., throng the principal thoroughfares. The foot-passengers consist of Indians, native labourers, and artisans, in light and neat costume; native gentlemen, or "caballeros," habited in the best European style; students and clerks, wrapped in Spanish cloaks on the hottest as on the coldest day; doñas and señoras, their heads covered with costly shawls or with silken hoods, and laced mantillas,—bonnets are only worn to ride out with, and that is a custom of modern introduction; women of the middle and lower classes, in costumes both graceful and stately, though of the gayest colours, their black hair often braided with the brightest and richest silken ribbons,—they also wear no other

covering to the head than mantillas of a less expensive, but by no means a less becoming description; and, lastly, Indian women in their working garb, or in their grotesque gala costume. Sometimes may be seen the black cassock and long shovel-hat of the "padre" (priest); the red and blue dresses of the "seices" (priests in embryo); the habit of the Dominican or Franciscan monks, and some few orders of nuns—more frequently the grey and brown dresses of the "Terceros" and "Terceras," the brotherhood and sisterhood of *the third order*; and occasionally even the monkish beard, girdle, and bare feet of the mendicant Capuchin friar.

The city of Guatemala has no hotels, but contains several extensive "mesones" for the accommodation of travelling merchants and dealers. These are more like Eastern caravansaries than inns, and much more attention is paid to the wants of the horses and mules than to the convenience of travellers. It is optional to use as a lodging the rooms provided apparently for the stowage of goods, of which there are long ranges opening upon a covered gallery, encumbered like a fair with traders and their wares; but these rooms are dark and unfurnished. The hospitality of the natives, however, makes this want but little felt. There are also boarding-houses, where the traveller can be more comfortably lodged than in the "meson." "After two days of stay," says the author of Mitla, "we changed our residence from the meson to a boarding-house belonging to a countryman of ours, where we got a room and very creditable entertainment. Our host kept a billiard room, a coffee and drinking

room, and general restaurant. Here the young men of the town congregated, and I had thus a good opportunity of studying their peculiarities.

"In the public dining-room of the hotel a French tailor (in Guatemala a gentleman) generally took upon himself the duties of entertaining the company, at the expense of his small credit for intellect,—at least in comparison with the multiform wit he elicited from his soup-eating associates, who, while discussing the massive piles of eatables on the board, exhausted also their supplies of logic and satire on this most impenetrable of butts.

"There is nothing like a clatter of tongues to drown the clatter of knife and fork; and I don't at all relish the solemn silence in which nought but the clang of steel on porcelain is heard, and nought seen save awing countenances bent in grim determination over doomed and bleeding masses of meat. There is nothing that makes the material food go down more glibly than a good and liberal outpouring of nonsense, crowned with a hearty laugh at other people's or one's own expense. *Vive la bagatelle!* above all, *in a hotel!*

"Under such auspices were we sitting one day, and making our host think seriously about the prices of 'beef and greens.' The French tailor, like Tam o' Shanter, was 'glorious' that day, recounting all the transgressions of taste, male or female, that had just come under his observation in his department, when of a sudden somebody shook the table—no! the walls shook also, the ceiling; the mighty beams supporting it groaned and twisted about, as if their

vitals were under the influence of cholic. The company stared at one another; but scarcely a face looked funny enough to warrant the impeachment of any one having played any trick upon the diners. Another heave, and everything movable, and what we might have thought before immovable, swayed about; a creaking, a rattling, and a subterranean growl upset the equilibrium of everything, and, above all, that of the bipeds—of most of them, at least—for away they rushed pell-mell into the court-yard, leaving the poor pudding standing smoking in the middle of the table. A few old staggers remained, fascinated, apparently, by the attraction of the smoking good cheer, and shamming as much cheer of their own as they could conscientiously make pretence to. This encouraged some of us to attempt also keeping up appearances; and so, with a sort of sea-sick feeling, and more sickly smiles, we revenged ourselves on the pudding by dissecting and embowelling it, though choking with our mouths full.

“We had just recovered ourselves sufficiently to swallow like Christians; the fugitives were returning, and reassuming their greedy looks in regard to pudding and dessert, when another unmitigated subterranean kick stopped every morsel in our throats. This was no laughing matter; we all felt exceedingly sick; we could not keep our positions on the chairs, but had to hold on to walls, doors, and window-frames, that had as much need of support as we had.

“The rocking of everything was accompanied by the same faint subterranean growl as the first time,

only more prolonged and perhaps fainter, and thus more suggestive of imaginary phantoms of horror. We had to evacuate the garrison. The roofs of the building shed their tiles like an old crow ruffling its dusky feathers, and everything nodded portentously.

"We waited for some time in the spacious courtyard, to see an end of this spectacle. We dodged tiles, and kept the most centralized position possible; but we got tired at last, and resolved to take a walk. We sallied into the streets, and there we were soon imbued with the terrible seriousness of an earthquake.

"From all the houses most of the inhabitants had come forth, to the most spacious places, where two streets crossed one another, or a little square or open place enabled them to remove as far as possible from the tottering houses. There they were, on their knees, pale and despairing, praying earnestly, some loud, some low, and here and there a heart-rending yell of '*Misericordia Domine!*' would be echoed by a hundred faltering tongues.

"There is nothing so infectious as general opinion, when the general opinion is that of extreme danger; consequently, the vulgar upshot of it, fear, showed its impress in the pale faces and trembling limbs one met in all parts of the streets. Be it understood, however, that this refers more to the lower classes and to the most weak of the higher; for I have seen a great number of the better families undergoing this ordeal of danger with the most heroic equanimity of mind. And amongst them, the fair sex was not always the one that flew into

the arms of protection. I have seen them extending their support, their equanimity, to those who, at other times, rule over them.

"We used to have our beds brought out into the corridor, towards the inner court-yard; for doors, during the working of a wall, may become jammed at the time you want to open them to save your head.

"The greatest portion of the community, vulgar and gentle, had taken up their night lodgings in the largest squares, in *tienda de campaña*, or tents of promiscuous materials. Those who could find no room in the squares, slept in the middle of the broadest streets, side by side, rank and file, like a slumbering Roman army. Those best to do in this world, and most afraid of the next, left the town altogether, and went, with kith and kin, into the country, where wooden houses, of elastic propensities, made the danger of being squeezed to death less imminent.

"Most business, of course, was dispensed with during this time, and people went constantly to see whether their friends were as afraid as themselves, and to find consolation in sympathy, and in scouting at those who pretended to underrate the danger. It was very amusing to see parties of young men making the round of their encamped acquaintances, having fortified their nerves with large dozes of Dutch courage, swaggering about their unshakeable souls, until some short jerk of the choleric ground would send them about their business—that of holding their tongues.

"On the whole, the protracted trembling did not occasion the amount of damage that might have

been expected ; but all the houses are built on the principle of resisting earthquakes,—low-storied, with broad bases, stretching, with an open square inside, over a good deal of enclosed ground, the wood-work strongly braced, the walls thick, mostly *adobe* (sun-dried bricks), or of a light and cohesive freestone. Some old houses fell, a few walls were rent asunder, some steeples split, some old ones fell down, and the streets were strewn with tiles and fragments of ornamental architecture, that had been placed too far above the centre of gravity.

“It was a curious sight to stand at the top of some of the inclined streets, and watch the perspective of it under a shock. You could see the movement coming, like a wave, rolling and swaying onward, uphill. The movement was not ubiquitous; it advanced slowly, from the lower part of the town; the houses saluting their *vis-à-vis*, the steeples shaking their heads, all amid deep silence, and the clear azure sky smiling mercilessly overhead on the contortions of the earth. This contrast, of serenity above and appalling misery below, imbued the heart with a feeling of hopelessness in the abating of wrath and the expectation of compassion.

“There were two distinct actions of the earth-shocks perceptible,—one vertical, the other horizontal, parallel with the surface; the latter was the more terrible, and told plainly every time, by an increased shower of tiles and additional rents in the walls.

“The shocks came to an end at last. The old volcano, del Agua, who never changed countenance during the whole proceedings, and looked extremely

calm and complacent at the twitching of the plain at his feet, the old vagabond seemed, at last, to feel ashamed; that is to say, he hid his face with a cloudy handkerchief, and pulled a cloud-cowl over his head,—disconcerted, no doubt, at the unsatisfactory effects of his kicks under the table-land."

Cheerfulness being thus re-established, all went on as usual, and the thoughtless inhabitants of Guatemala danced, sung, and amused themselves, as if they remembered not the solemn warning they had received, that there was but a step between them and death.

Such is life in Guatemala, the chief town of the province. The Republic of Guatemala is divided into provinces, and the province in which the capital is situated domineers over the rest. The province to the north-west is called Los Altos, from its mountainous character; and its capital is Quezaltenango. A busy population of Ladinos (that is, half whites, half Indians) lives interspersed there amongst the numerous villages of Indians. The manufacture of woollen garments, such as jackets, trousers, blankets, &c., is carried on with great vigour by handlooms. The cultivation of wheat, potatoes, and Indian corn is considerable. The people dislike the domination of the Guatemaltecos, as they call the people of Guatemala; and this dislike led to the revolt which terminated in the battle of Patzum, before related.

The Indians have villages of their own, where they keep up their own habits and customs. The communities of Santa Caterina, Santa Lucia, and another village of less note, have scarcely ever been

visited by white strangers. The Indians of this race have always kept separate from the Indians of other communities. Their submission to the Spaniards has never been complete. Though always defeated in any attempt outside of their native fastnesses, they have never been much meddled with in their own territory. The government very wisely has contented itself with a very superficial promise of allegiance; to the observance of which four centuries of Spanish power have accustomed the very independent spirit of these mountaineers. It would seem as if these highland Indians shared in some degree the indomitable spirit always shown by the inhabitants of mountainous countries all over the world.

M. Von Tempsky gives the following account of the first view he had of Santa Catarina, the capital of this Indian territory:—

“Somehow or another (after many difficulties in ascending and descending), I reached safely the rim of the mountain caldron, at the bottom of which Santa Catarina is situated. Another very safe and very quick descent landed me, at last, on a road which I was happy to find horizontal,—the form most desired by mules, asses, horses, and tired travellers.

“At a turn of the road, round the towering front of a gigantic promontory of basalt, the roofs and houses of the village came in view. All were covered with red tiles, had white-washed walls, and astonished me by their number, peeping from a labyrinth of gullies and ravines,—here on the side of a hill, there on the top, disseminated, amphi-

theatricality, amongst bush and crag. A venerable old church, with a modest curacy adjoining, formed the centre of the nucleus of houses, which there followed the more regular lines of streets. But above all, around all this dissemination of roofs, soared hills—apparently inaccessible—piled upon hills, showing us the sky, all but a blue dome overhead. Fields of wheat and potatoes were discernible on every more gentle slope and on the more even of the mountain terraces. The basaltic promontory of which I spoke, as revealing the first view of the village, is but a pillar of a solitary mountain Colossus, disconnected with the general wall round the valley, and buttressed by perpendicular ramparts of basaltic columns, here jagged and split, there massive and unshaken, shoulder to shoulder, with their wide-spreading bases washed by a dancing little torrent. The rounded head of this mountain is frizzled with a forest of cedars, of a dark bluish green; and around its edges there was then a yellow field of wheat, on which a labourer appeared but the size of a crawling ant.

“The dress of these Indians is, at the present day, the same they wore on the day of the conquest. They weave wool for their black jackets, cotton for their wide white trousers, which are drawn up the waist and display their muscular legs; and they have sandals on their feet when on a journey. The head is covered with a white cotton cloth, wound, in turban fashion, around it, and having its long ends hanging over the back. A sash, dyed blue, red, or violet, from native dye-woods, confines the waist and keeps up the trousers, and its fringed ends hang

down in front. The head-men wear a sort of open-sleeved blue jacket of wool over the black one; and, over the white head-dress, a black broad-brimmed straw hat. A long silver-mounted staff is the mark of their authority. The shepherds, who form a class, wear, in distinction, a woollen apron, made of a black and white check, resembling the *maud* worn by the shepherds of the Scottish borders.

“The Catarina Indians, in general, are the most famous throughout Guatemala for carrying the heaviest burdens on their backs, over the worst of roads, for the longest distances, and in the shortest time. Their products of wool, cotton, yarn, grain, potatoes, and a variety of smaller articles, such as pottery, certain tools, &c., are all carried thus to the market of Guatemala. They generally go in bands of thirty or forty, Indian file, dog’s trot, with the chief at their head, and each with his long staff,—their support and their commonest weapon. Each with nearly two hundred pounds’ weight on his back, supported by straps round the forehead, shoulders, and waist, bending forward they go thirty miles a-day, without fatigue and in good time; and no rider has any chance with them in the steep parts of the roads.

“The native language of these Indians is *El Quiché*. I knew only two of them in Santa Catarina who understood Spanish.

“Their religion is a curious mixture of Paganism and Popery.”

We close this brief sketch of some of the most remarkable features of the province of Guatemala, with Mr. Stephens’ account of his crossing that

country, to obtain his first view of the great Pacific:—

“ At two o'clock, under a brilliant moonlight, and with a single guide, we started for the Pacific. The road was level and wooded. We passed a ‘trapiche,’ or sugar-mill, worked by oxen, and before daylight reached the village of Masagua, four leagues dis-




BRANCH OF ORANGE-TREE.

tant, built in a clearing cut out of the woods, at the entrance of which we stopped, under a grove of orange trees, and by the light of the moon filled our pockets and ‘alforgas’ with the shining fruit. Daylight broke upon us in a forest of gigantic trees,

from seventy-five to a hundred feet high, and from twenty to twenty-five feet in circumference, with creepers winding around their trunks and hanging from the branches. The road was merely a path through the forest formed by cutting away shrubs and branches. The freshness of the morning was delightful. We had descended from the table of land called the Tierras Templadas, and were now in the Tierras Calientes; but at nine o'clock the glare and heat of the sun did not penetrate the thick shade of the woods. In some places the branches of the trees, trimmed by the machete of a passing muleteer, and hung with a drapery of vines and creepers, bearing red and purple flowers, formed for a long distance natural arches more beautiful than any ever fashioned by man; and there were parrots and other birds of beautiful plumage flying among the trees,—among them guacamayas, or great macaws, large, clothed in red, yellow, and green, and when on the wing displaying a splendid plumage. But there were also vultures and scorpions, and, running across the road and up the trees, innumerable iguanas or lizards, from an inch to three feet long. The road was a mere track among the trees, perfectly desolate, though twice we met muleteers bringing up goods from the port. At the distance of twelve miles we reached the 'hacienda' of Maranjo, occupied by a major-domo, who looked after the cattle of the proprietor, roaming wild in the woods. The house stood alone in the midst of a clearing, built of poles, with a cattle-yard in front; and I spied a cow with a calf, which was a sign of milk. But you must catch a cow before you can milk her.

The major-domo went out with a lasso, and playing upon the chord of nature, caught the calf first, and then the cow, and hauled her up by the horns to a post. The hut had but one 'guacal,' or drinking-shell, made of a gourd, and it was so small that we sat down by the cow, so as not to lose much time. We had bread, chocolate, and sausages, and, after a ride of twenty-four miles, made a glorious breakfast; but we exhausted the poor cow, and I was ashamed to look the calf in the face.

"Resuming our journey, at a distance of nine miles we reached the solitary hacienda of Overo. The whole of this great plain was densely wooded and entirely uncultivated; but the soil was rich, and capable of maintaining, with very little labour, thousands of people. Beyond Overo the country was open in some places, and the sun beat down with scorching force. At one o'clock we crossed a rustic bridge, and through the opening in the trees saw the river Michatoyal. We followed along its bank, and very soon heard breaking on the shore the waves of the great Southern Ocean. The sound was grand and solemn, giving a strong impression of the immensity of those waters, which had been rolling from the creation,—for more than five thousand years unknown to civilized man. I was loath to disturb the impression, and rode slowly through the woods, listening in profound silence to the grandest music that ever fell upon my ear. The road terminated on the bank of the river, and I had crossed the continent of America."





CHAPTER V.

SAN SALVADOR.

Topographical features—Mountain system—The River Lempa—Cultivation of indigo—Description of the plant—Balsam of Peru—Sonsonate—Volcanoes—The lighthouse of Salvador—Description of the city of San Salvador—Account of its destruction by an earthquake.

THE state of San Salvador lies upon the Pacific Ocean, having a coast line of about 160 miles, extending from the Bay of Fonseca to the River Paza, which divides it from Guatemala. Although the smallest of the Central American states, it has relatively the largest population, most industry, and the largest commerce.

The topographical features of San Salvador are remarkable. The coast presents, for the most part, a belt of low, rich, alluvial land, varying in width from 10 to 20 miles. Behind this, and presenting an abrupt face seaward, rises what may be called a coast range of mountains, or rather, a broad plateau, which has an average elevation of about 2000 feet, and is relieved by numerous high volcanic peaks.

Between this range and the great primitive chain of the Cordilleras lies a broad valley, vary-

ing in width from 20 to 30 miles, and having a length of upwards of 100 miles. The coast plateau subsides generally towards this magnificent valley, which is drained by the great River Lempa, and is unsurpassed for beauty and fertility by any equal extent of country under the tropics. Its northern border rests upon the flank of the mountains of Honduras, which tower above it to the height of 6000 or 8000 feet, and is comparatively broken and rugged. To the south of the Lempa, however, the country rises from the immediate and proper valley of the river, first by a terrace with a very abrupt face, and afterwards by a gradual slope to the summit of the plateau. Another considerable basin, of great beauty and fertility, is formed by the system of small rivers which rise in the western parts of the state, around the foot of the volcano of Santa Anna, and fall into the sea near Sonsonate. It forms a triangle, the base resting on the sea, and the apex defined by the volcano. Another and still larger basin is that of the Rio San Miguel, lying transversely to the valley of the Rio Lempa, in the eastern division of the state, and separated only by detached mountains from the Bay of Fonseca.

The mountain system of San Salvador, if its isolated volcanoes and volcanic groups can be called a system, is peculiar and interesting. Not less than eleven great volcanoes bristle along the crest of the plateau which intervenes between the valley of the Lempa and the sea. They form nearly a right line from north-west to south-east, accurately coinciding with the great line of volcanic action, which is clearly

defined from Mexico to Peru. There are also some others of less note, besides numerous extinct craters, (sometimes filled with water,) and various volcanic orifices.

The Rio Lempa, considered under every point of view, is unquestionably the most important natural feature of San Salvador. In respect of size, it ranks with the Montagua in Guatemala, and the Ulua and Segovia in Honduras. For a considerable part of its course it is a navigable stream, and therefore destined to become of great value in the development of the resources of the state. It rises on the confines of Guatemala, at the foot of the high peak (sometimes called volcano) of Chingo, and flows in a south-east direction for a distance of more than 100 miles, when it turns abruptly to the south, and, breaking through the coast range, finds its way, a distance of 50 miles further, to the sea. The Lempa receives several considerable tributaries on its course. The Rio Paza, separating San Salvador from Guatemala, and the Rio Miguel, are the only remaining rivers of considerable size in San Salvador. There are two considerable lakes in the state, one in the north-west and one nearly in the centre.

In the north-eastern part of the state there are silver mines, which have been extensively worked, with profitable results. The silver is found in the mines known as Minas de Tabanco, in combination with galena and sulphuret of zinc. They are easily worked, and yield from 47 to 2537 ounces to the ton. The mine called Santa Rosalia is the richest, and gives the maximum yield here stated. A considerable part of its ores are shipped direct to

England. An attempt was made, about the year 1830, to work these mines on a large scale, by an English Company, which sent out a large corps of Cornish miners for the purpose. The machinery sent out was so heavy that it was found impossible to transport it from the coast; and this difficulty, along with others, broke up the enterprise.

There are also gold mines, about two leagues from Tabanco; and rich mines of iron near the village of Petapa. It is also believed that vast beds of coal exist throughout the valley of the Lempa, and in the valleys of some of its principal tributaries.

"The difference between Salvador, and Guatemala and Mexico, in regard to scenery," says the author of *Mitla*, "is, that the former has more detached peaks, and the country does not rise to that general elevation of table-land and wide-spreading mountain ridges as in Mexico, and there are not visible such fearful rents in the general surface as in Guatemala. The roads present thus less difficulties to overcome, and the whole aspect of the country is lovely and fertile; to which extensive tobacco-fields, with the broad green leaves of the plant, contribute an aspect of cultivation, agreeable, as a contrast to the wilder scenery."

San Salvador, from its conformation of surface and the nature of its soil, is essentially an agricultural state. Around the Bay of Jiquilisco, cotton has been cultivated with success. Maize, coffee, and tobacco are also grown; sugar is largely produced, and rum is distilled from it. Indigo constitutes the chief article in the exports of the state, and enters most largely into its resources as an article of trade.

It is produced from an indigenous triennial plant, known by the Indian name of *Jiquilite* (*Indigofera disperma*). It takes, on the average, three hundred pounds of the plant to produce one pound of indigo. This plant flourishes luxuriantly on nearly all kinds of soil. The land requires comparatively little preparation, being merely burned over and slightly ploughed. The seed is then scattered broadcast. This is done in the months of February and April; and the growth of the plant is so rapid, that by the first of August it has attained a height of from five to six feet, and is fit for cutting. "On land freshly sown," says Baily, "the product of the first year is but moderate; the quality, however, is good. The strength of the crop is in the second year. The product of the first year is called *tinta nueva*; that of the second, *tinta retoño*. Experienced cultivators manage to have a portion of each description in each season. After the cutting, the stems and roots remain without signs of vegetation until the early part of the following year, when they shoot out again. The *retoño*, as being the most advanced, is first ready for cutting, as the *tinta nueva* seldom reaches the proper state before September. The manufacture of the indigo is then carried on daily until the whole crop is got in; and by the end of October or the beginning of November the produce is fit for market.

"The manufacture of the indigo requires no very difficult nor expensive processes; but it must be cut promptly at the proper period, or else it becomes worthless."

There are many species of *indigofera*, all more

or less differing from each other. Three species are cultivated in America. The indigo of Guatemala was long prized as the best. It grows higher, is hardier, and affords a better pulp, than the *indigofera tinctoria*; but the latter yields a greater quantity, and is therefore often preferred.

Indigofera is a knotty, shrubby plant, propagated by seed. The *tinctoria* has a root of about a quarter of an inch in thickness, and more than a foot in length. The root has a faint smell, somewhat resembling parsley. From this root issues a short bushy stem, of nearly the same thickness. This stem rises about two feet from the ground; it is hard, and almost entirely ligneous, and without any appearance of pith in the inside. The leaves are winged, or consist of small leaves ranged in two or three pairs on each side of a long foot-stalk, which is surmounted by an odd leaf; they are of an oval form, smooth and soft to the touch, furrowed above, and of a darker colour on the upper than on the under side. From about one-third of the stem to the extremity, there are ears that are loaded with very small flowers from twelve to fifteen in number; these are destitute of smell; they are succeeded by long, crooked, brown pods, which contain small yellow seeds. The wild indigo has shorter pods and black seeds. The seeds of the Guatemala indigo are green, and the stalks red. This plant requires a smooth, rich soil, well tilled, and neither too dry nor too moist. Indigo is entirely the production of a warm climate; it has been observed that "it is the child of the sun," and cannot be advantageously cultivated anywhere except within the tropics. A

higher temperature than 60° is absolutely necessary both for its vegetation and maceration.

The seed is sowed in little furrows about the breadth of the hoe, and two or three inches in



INDIGO-PLANT.

depth. These furrows are made a foot apart from each other, and in as straight a line as possible. A bushel of seed is sufficient for five acres of land. Though it may be sown in all seasons, spring is mostly preferred for the purpose. Soon after sowing, continual attention is required to pluck the weeds which would quickly choke the plant and impede its

growth. Sufficient moisture causes it to shoot above the surface in three or four days, and it is usually fit for gathering at the end of two months. When it begins to flower, it is cut with a sickle a few inches above its roots. The "ratoons," or subsequent growth from the same plant, ripen in six or eight weeks. Sometimes four crops are obtained in one year from the same roots; but in North America and other parts, where the heat is less fervid, the cultivator obtains but two, or perhaps only one crop. The produce diminishes fast after the second cutting, and therefore it is said to be absolutely necessary to sow the seeds afresh every year, or every two years at furthest.

The colouring matter is obtained from the whole plant. There are two modes used for its extraction—it is fermented, or it is scalded. The first method is universally practised in South America and in the West Indies, and almost wholly by the English factors in the East.

There is no article of commerce which fluctuates more in its price, and is of greater variety of quality, than indigo. It is distinguished according to its different shades of colour, arising from the manner of its preparation and the proportion of foreign substances with which it is mixed. The principal shades are blue, violet, and copper colour; the blue being the best quality. These are again subdivided into fine, good, and middling. The indigo which is imported from different countries is known in commerce by its relative value; and accordingly there are no fewer than twenty-four kinds in the English market, each bearing a different price, vary-

ing through all the intermediate proportions from 8s. 6d. to 2s. per pound. Bengal is the best, and Manillo indigo the worst in quality.

That part of the coast of San Salvador extending from Acajutla to La Libertad is termed "Costa del Balsimo," from the circumstance of producing what is known in the *Materia Medica* as "balsam of Peru." Lying to the seaward of the volcanic coast-range of mountains which I have described, the whole tract is much broken by the spurs and ranges of hills which the latter sends down toward the sea, and so thickly covered with forests that it is difficult, if not impossible, to penetrate it on horse-back. It is exclusively occupied by Indians, who are but little altered from their primitive condition. They support themselves by the produce of the balsam-trees, and by hewing out cedar planks and scantling, which they carry on their shoulders to Sonsonate and San Salvador. Their chief wealth, however, is the balsam, of which they collect annually about twenty thousand pounds; which is sold to dealers in the city at an average price of two shillings per pound. "The trees yielding this commodity," according to Baily, "are very numerous on the privileged spot, and apparently limited to it; for on other parts of the coast, seemingly identical in climate, rarely an individual of the species is to be met with. The balsam is obtained by making an incision in the tree, whence it gradually exudes, and is absorbed by pieces of cotton rag inserted for the purpose. These, when thoroughly saturated, are replaced by others; which, as they are removed, are thrown into boiling water.

The heat detaches the balsam from the cotton, and, being of less specific gravity than the water, it floats on the top, is skimmed off, and put in calabashes for sale. The wood of the tree is of close grain,



BALSAM-PLANT.

handsomely veined, nearly of a mahogany colour, but redder. It retains for a long time an agreeable, fragrant odour, and takes a fine polish. It would be excellent for cabinet-work, but can seldom be obtained, as the trees are never felled until, by age or accidental decay, their precious sap becomes exhausted. This balsam was long erroneously sup-

posed to be a production of South America; for in the early periods of the Spanish dominion, and by the commercial regulations then existing relative to the fruits of this coast, it was usually sent by the merchants here to Callao, and being thence transmitted to Spain, it there received the name of "balsam of Peru," being deemed indigenous to that country. The real place of its origin was known only to a few mercantile men."

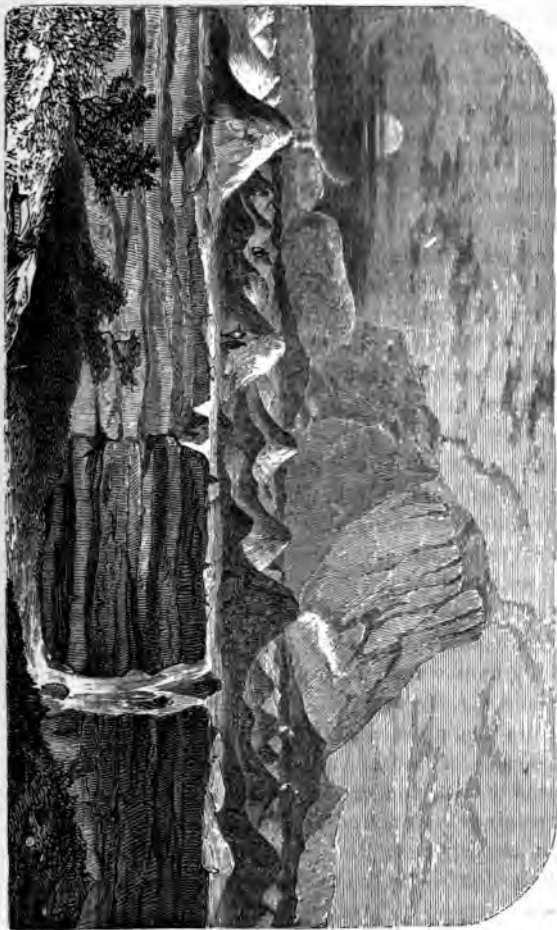
There are large forests of balsam near the town of Sonsonate, the third town in rank in the state. It is thus described by M. Von Tempsky:—

"Sonsonate is one of the prettiest little towns of Central America. At the foot of the volcano of Izalco, its streets rise amphitheatrically from a fertile plain that stretches to the Pacific, distant about eighteen miles. All the nearest vicinity of Sonsonate teems with luxuriant vegetation, fruits of all kind, and abundance of cattle. Living (as people will call eating, drinking, and sleeping) is exceedingly cheap in Sonsonate; money is scarce, and a sixpence goes a far way with the initiated. The cultivation of tobacco and the collection of Peruvian balsam form the two main springs of the commerce of that neighbourhood. There are entire forests of trees containing the balsam; but let nobody imagine that he needs but to go there and set people to work upon them. There is not a tree that has not an invisible owner, that, at the time of your tapping it, would appear, machete in hand, asking you what you meant by going into his *jardin* (garden), *alias* an entangled, boggy, and intricate virgin forest, where one would rather feel inclined to appeal to

the monkeys for direction and information than to men, and particularly owners of land. But thus it is the native, aboriginal, Indian population keeps this branch of commerce (at least the gathering of the produce) in its own hands; and to each family a certain number of trees are assigned for their benefit, and nobody else can be permitted to claim a share in this distribution. Consequently, the Ladinos, superior beings, as they imagine themselves, refrain from gathering the balsam directly; but they entrap both balsam and owner as soon as he comes to town with his produce at certain seasons of the year.

"No Indian goes to any new merchant; he sticks to his first acquaintance, if he be not fleeced too mercilessly. Therefore it is amusing to see the tricks employed to procure Indian connection—the failures and occasional success. The Indian generally exchanges the greater part of his balsam for goods and a little cash—the former for the family necessities, such as millinery ware, especially ribbons (for which wife and daughters both insist), a knife, an axe, a machete, shirts, a blanket for himself; and the 'balance' is employed in procuring that dearest of all enjoyments, spending your money foolishly, and getting laughed at for your pains—an enjoyment common to both savage and civilized beings."

The volcanic features of San Salvador are both numerous and striking. Only two of the eleven great volcanoes of the state are what are called "vivo"—alive or active—namely, San Miguel and Izalco. The first named rises sheer from the plain



VOLCANO OF JOBUULLO.

to the height of 6000 feet, in the form of a regular truncated cone. It emits constantly great volumes of smoke from its summit; but its eruptions have been confined, since the historical period, to the opening of great fissures in its sides, from which have flowed currents of lava, reaching, in some instances, for a number of miles. The last eruption of this kind occurred in 1848, but it resulted in no serious damage.

It is difficult to conceive a grander natural object than this volcano. Its base is shrouded in densest green, blending with the lighter hues of the grasses which succeed the forest. Above these, the various colours melt imperceptibly into each other. First comes the rich umber of the scorixæ, and then the silver tint of the newly-fallen ashes at the summit; and still above all, floating in heavy opalescent volumes, or rising like a plume to heaven, is the smoke, which rolls up eternally from its incandescent depths.

The volcano of Izalco, and that of Jorullo in Mexico, described by Humboldt, are, I believe, the only ones which have originated on this continent since the discovery. The volcano of Izalco arose from the plain, near the great mass of the extinct volcano of Santa Anna, in 1770, and covers what was then a fine cattle hacienda or estate. It has remained in a state of constant eruption; and receives, in consequence, the designation of "El Faro del Salvador"—the lighthouse of Salvador. Its explosions occur with great regularity, at intervals of from ten to twenty minutes, with a noise like the discharge of a park of artillery, accompanied with a dense

smoke, and a cloud of ashes and stones, which fall upon every side, and add to the height of the cone, which is now about 2500 feet in altitude.

Notwithstanding its numerous volcanic features, San Salvador has suffered less from earthquakes than either Costa Rica or Guatemala. The greatest catastrophe that has befallen the state from this cause occurred in April 1854, when the capital of the state was utterly destroyed by a violent earthquake. Previous to this event, the city of San Salvador, in point of size and importance, ranked third in Central America—Guatemala, in the state of the same name, being first, and Leon in Nicaragua second.

After the confederation of the states, it was selected as the capital of the new republic, and continued to be the seat of the federal government until the dissolution of the republic in 1839.

The position of the town was remarkably beautiful; in the midst of a broad elevated plain, on the summit of the high table-land which intervenes between the valley of the River Lempa and the Pacific. About three miles to the westward is the great volcano of San Salvador. The cone is about 8000 feet in height. The volcano proper is a vast mass, with a broad base of irregular outline, its summit serrated by the jagged edges of the crater, and is much less in altitude than the cone. This cone seems to have been formed by ashes and scorix thrown out of the crater, which is represented as a league and a half in circumference, and 1000 "varas," or nearly 3000 feet deep.

The population of San Salvador was estimated in

1852 at 25,000. With the exception of the central and paved part of the city, it was literally embowered in tropical fruit-trees. The red-roofed dwellings, closely shut in with evergreen hedges of cactus, shadowed over by palm and orange-trees, with a dense background of broad-leaved plantains, almost sinking beneath their heavy clusters of golden fruit, were singularly picturesque and beautiful. In recalling the picture, it is sad to think that all is now abandoned and desolate; that the great square is deserted, and that a silence, unbroken even by the fall of water from the lately glittering fountains, reigns over the ruined and deserted, but once busy and beautiful city.

The following account of the destruction of the city is from the "Boletin Extraordinario del Gobierno del Salvador," of May 2, 1854, and may be regarded as authentic:—

"The night of the 16th of April 1854, will ever be one of sad and bitter memory for the people of Salvador. On that unfortunate night our happy and beautiful capital was made a heap of ruins. Movements of the earth were felt on the morning of Holy Thursday, preceded by sounds like the rolling of heavy artillery over pavements, and like distant thunder. The people were a little alarmed in consequence of this phenomenon, but it did not prevent them from meeting in the churches to celebrate the solemnities of the day. On Saturday all was quiet, and confidence was restored. The people of the neighbourhood assembled as usual to celebrate the Passover. The night of Saturday was tranquil, as was also the whole of Sunday. The heat, it is

true, was considerable, but the atmosphere was calm and serene. For the first three hours of the evening nothing unusual occurred; but at half-past nine, a severe shock of an earthquake, occurring without the usual preliminary noises, alarmed the whole city. Many families left their houses, and made encampments in the public squares, while others prepared to pass the night in their respective courtyards. Finally, at ten minutes to eleven, without premonition of any kind, the earth began to heave and tremble with such fearful force that in ten seconds the entire city was prostrated. The crashing of houses and churches stunned the ears of the terrified inhabitants, while a cloud of dust from the falling ruins enveloped them in a pall of impenetrable darkness. Not a drop of water could be got to relieve the half-choked and suffocating, for the wells and fountains were filled up or made dry. The clock tower of the Cathedral carried a great part of that edifice with it in its fall. The towers of the Church of San Francisco crushed the Episcopal Oratory and part of the Palace. The Church of Santa Domingo was buried beneath its towers, and the College of the Assumption was entirely ruined. The new and beautiful edifice of the University was demolished. The Church of the Merced separated in the centre, and its walls fell outward to the ground. Of the private houses a few were left standing, but all were rendered uninhabitable. It is worthy of remark that the walls left standing are old ones; all those of modern construction have fallen. The public edifices of the Government and city shared the common destruction.

“The devastation was effected, as we have said, in the first ten seconds; for, although the succeeding shocks were tremendous, and accompanied by fearful rumblings beneath our feet, they had comparatively trifling results, for the reason that the first had left but little for their ravages.

“Solemn and terrible was the picture presented on the dark, funereal night, of a whole people clustering in the plazas, and on their knees crying with loud voices to Heaven for mercy, or in agonizing accents calling for their children and friends, whom they believed to be buried beneath the ruins! A heaven opaque and ominous; a movement of the earth rapid and unequal, causing a terror indescribable; an intense sulphurous odour filling the atmosphere, and indicating an approaching eruption of the volcano; streets filled with ruins, or overhung by threatening walls; a suffocating cloud of dust, almost rendering respiration impossible,—such was the spectacle presented by the unhappy city on that memorable and awful night!

“A hundred boys were shut up in the College, many invalids crowded the hospitals, and the barracks were full of soldiers. The sense of the catastrophe which must have befallen them gave poignancy to the first moments of reflection after the earthquake was over. It was believed that at least a fourth part of the inhabitants had been buried beneath the ruins. The members of the Government, however, hastened to ascertain, as far as practicable, the extent of the catastrophe, and to quiet the public mind. It was found that the loss of life had been much less than was supposed; and

it now appears probable that the number of the killed will not exceed 100, and of wounded 50. Among the latter is the bishop, who received a severe blow on the head; the late president, Señor Dueñas; a daughter of the president; and the wife of the secretary of the Legislative Chambers,—the latter severely.

“Fortunately, the earthquake has not been followed by rain; which gives an opportunity to disinter the public archives, as also many of the valuables contained in the dwellings of the citizens.

“The movements of the earth still continue, with strong shocks; and the people, fearing a general swallowing up of the site of the city, or that it may be buried under some sudden eruption of the volcano, are hastening away, taking with them their household goods, the sweet memories of their infancy, and their domestic animals,—perhaps the only property left for the support of their families,—exclaiming with Virgil, ‘*Nos patriæ fines et dulcia linquimus arva!*’”

San Salvador had often before suffered from earthquakes, but none of them were comparable in violence to that now recorded. The event inspired so profound a terror, that Mr. Squier says that the people did not purpose to return to the same site, but intended to select a new locality for their capital.

Mr. Squier says of the people of San Salvador, that “in respect of industry, general intelligence, and all the requisites of good order, they are entitled to rank first in Central America.”



CHAPTER VI.

HONDURAS.

Origin of the name—Climate—Aspect of the country—Productions—Mahogany—Houses of the mahogany-cutters—Their way of life—The mahogany season—Other precious woods—The chapulin—Wild animals of Honduras—The iguana—Hiccatee—Turtle—Serpents—Minerals of Honduras—Chief ports—Description of Truxillo—Comayagua—Indian village.

THE State of Honduras takes its name from the Bay of *Honduras*, signifying *depths*, which forms its northernmost boundary. The first navigators so denominated it, because they with difficulty obtained any soundings in it. The surface of the ground is in this state even more generally uneven than elsewhere. Its population is scanty in comparison with the two former states; and, like Guatemala, it still comprises vast districts of virgin forests, partially peopled by wild Indians. The climate, like that of the other states, is varied, being generally temperate in the interior, which is notable for its mines; and hot near the coasts, which abound with rivers, from the banks of which much mahogany and sarsaparilla are taken. Comayagua the capital, is still a city of some importance, though said to have been much more so formerly. This state possesses two sea-port towns, Truxillo and Omioa, which were once active

as military and commercial depôts of Spain; but they are now fallen into comparative decay.

"The aspects of nature in Honduras," says Mr. Squier, "are varied and striking. The conditions of conformation of coast, of elevation and consequent temperature, the amount of rain falling upon the respective declivities of the Cordilleras, all contribute to diversify the forms under which vegetable life presents itself to the eye of the traveller. The three great features, nevertheless, are the coast alluvions, generally densely wooded; the elevated valleys of the interior, spreading out in broad savannas; and the high plateaus of the mountains sustaining an unending forest of scattered pines, relieved by occasional clumps of oak.

"Upon the northern coast, in the broad plain through which the Ulua and Chamelicon find their way to the sea, the country is so low as occasionally to be overflowed for considerable distances. Here grow immense forests of cedar, mahogany, ceiba, India-rubber, and other large and valuable trees; thickly interspersed with palms, whose plumes rise through every opening, and fringe the bases of all the hills. The smaller streams are arched over with verdure, and completely shut out from the sun, while the large rivers gleam like silver bands in fields of unbroken emerald. But even here, where the land is lowest, spread out broad, grassy meadows, the retreats of innumerable wild-fowl; and during the dry season, when the grass on the hills becomes sere and withered, offering abundant support for herds of cattle. In the depths of these primeval forests the mahogany-cutters prosecute their laborious

calling, rousing the echoes with the ringing strokes of the axe, and the shouts of the truck-men, who, with twenty oxen attached to a single log, drag the heavy trunks to the edges of the rivers. The broad meadows supply them with food for their cattle, while every company has its hunter and fisher, to help out the fixed rations with which it is provided by the proprietors of the establishments.

“Further to the eastward, on the same coast, the heavy forests are chiefly confined to the valleys of the rivers. The plain country of the coast is everywhere narrow. The spurs, or dependent ridges of the mountain groups of the interior, often come down to the very shore. Immediately behind Omoa, within cannon-shot of its fortress, the mountains begin to rise abruptly, and speedily attain the height of 9000 feet, looking down majestically upon their shadows in the clear waters of the beautiful Bay of Amatique. Such also is the case at the port of Truxillo.

“On some of the plains, as on that of Comayagua, the varying forms of cactus become distinguishing features, frequently attaining to gigantic size, and almost taking the character of forests. Here they stud the ground, spherical and spinated, warning man and beast against incautious tread; yet radiating from their grooved sides flowers and fruits of delicate ruby, in shape and colour like glasses of tenderest crystal, flowing over with ruddy wine of golden Burgundy. There they rise in tall, fluted columns, appearing in the exaggerating twilight like the ruins of ancient temples. And still beyond we see them, articulated and jointed, spreading their

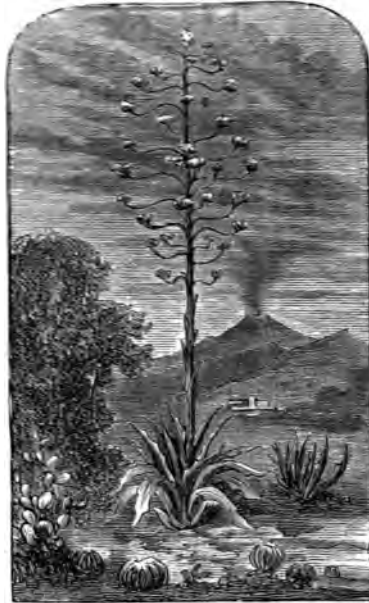


VARIETIES OF CACTUS.

broad succulent palms, silvered with the silky habiliments of the scarlet cochineal. And yet again, lavish of contrasting forms, they trail like serpents over the ground, and twine themselves in knotty coils around fallen trunks, and among the crevices of the barren rocks. Here, too, the agave appears, with its dense green clusters of spiny-edged leaves, shooting up its tall stem to flower but once, scatter forth its thousand bulbs, and then to die.

“The mountains which rise around these valleys are ascended by terraces, crowned with forests of pines and oaks, and carpeted with grass. The summits of the mountains sometimes run up in peaks, but generally constitute broad table-lands, more or less undulating, and often spreading out in rolling savannahs, traversed with low ridges of verdure and

green belts of trees, which droop over streams as bright and cool as those of New England. Here the familiar blackberry is indigenous, and the



THE AGAVE.

bushes which impede the traveller are covered with fruit. Wheat fields billowing beneath the cool mountain winds, and orchards of peach and apple trees, struggling against man's neglect, give to these districts all the aspects of the temperate zone; and when at night, bright fires of the pine illuminate every hut, and the picturesque inhabitants cluster around them to receive the warmth which the tem-

perature here renders necessary to comfort, the stranger can scarcely appreciate that he is under the tropics, and within fourteen degrees of the line. The contrast which his experiences of to-day afford with those of yesterday, when he rode among groves of palms, plantains, and oranges, becomes still more decided when the cold sleety rain descends from leaden skies, or the sharp hail falls from tumultuous clouds, swept over his head by blasts as chill and pinching as those of a northern November.

“Whether in plain, in valley, or on mountain, everywhere the trees are covered with parasitic plants. Some varieties of cactus, particularly that of which the long tangled arms are prismatic in form, do not disdain to fix themselves in the forks of the calabash-tree, and overwhelm it with their own more rapid growth. So abundant are these air-plants, that it is sometimes difficult to discover the verdure of the tree to which they are attached. Some are delicate as threads of silk, and others coarse and rank, but all of wax-like beauty, and many producing flowers of brilliant colours.

“Upon the higher mountain crests, where the short and hardy grass betokens a temperature too low for luxuriant vegetation of any kind, the air-plants themselves disappear, and the pines and gnarled oaks are draped in a sober mantle of long grey moss, which waves mournfully in the wind, like frayed and dusty banners from the walls of old cathedrals. The rocks themselves are brown with mosses, and, except the bright springs gushing from beneath them, and trickling away with a silvery murmur, there is no sound to break the eternal silence. The

traveller sees, perhaps, a dark shadow sweep over his path;—it is that of the eagle or of the voiceless raven, poising in the sky. Upon some distant rock his eye catches a slight and graceful figure;—there is a sudden but noiseless bound, and the antelope of the mountain has disappeared.

“The precious woods of Honduras probably constitute at present the principal item in the exports of the state. Those best known are the mahogany and rosewood; but the proportion of the former which enters into commerce is much the greater; and, both in this respect, and as giving employment to a considerable body of the inhabitants of the state, it is entitled to the first consideration.”

And here it may be observed that the mahogany tree of Honduras (*Swietenia mahagoni*), in respect of its vast size and magnificent foliage, is entitled to be called “King of the Forest.” In comparison with it, all other trees dwindle into insignificance. The enormous size and height of the trunk, the vast spread of its branches, and the space of ground occupied by its roots, are equally remarkable. It is of exceedingly slow growth, hardly undergoing a perceptible increase of size in the narrow span of man’s life. It has been calculated that it requires three hundred years wherein to attain a growth proper for cutting. Some idea may be formed of the great size which it sometimes attains, from the fact that the lower section of a tree, seventeen feet long, has been known to measure “in the square” five feet six inches,—equal to five hundred and fifty cubic feet, and a weight of seventeen tons.

The mahogany grows in nearly all parts of



BRANCH AND FLOWER OF THE MAHOGANY-TREE.

Honduras, in the valleys of the various streams. It is, however, most abundant upon the low grounds which border the rivers flowing into the Bay of Honduras, where it also attains its greatest size and beauty, and where the mahogany-works, called "cortes" (cuttings) by the Spaniards, are chiefly confined. As these lands are for the most part the property of the state, the wood is cut under licenses obtained from the government, which exacts a fixed sum for each tree. Except those made at the

mouths of the various rivers, for receiving, marking, and shipping the wood as it is floated down, the mahogany establishments are necessarily temporary, and changed from time to time as trees become scarce in their neighbourhood.



THE MAHOGANY-TREE.

Of all occupations known to man, that of the mahogany-cutter is perhaps the wildest in its nature, and yet among the most systematic in its arrangements. When the cutter has fixed upon the valley of some river as the field of his operations, he makes a depôt for storing provisions, and for securing and embarking the wood. Here he maintains a little fleet of *pitpans* for carrying supplies and keeping up relations with the "works" proper, the sites of which are determined chiefly by the abundance of trees, their accessibility, and the means that exist for feeding the cattle which it is necessary to use in "trucking" the wood. To these points it is often necessary to drive the oxen through thick and

untracked forests, and to carry the chains and trucks, by means of small boats, against strong currents, or over shallows and rapids, which are only surmounted with infinite labour.

The site once definitely fixed upon, the next step is to erect temporary dwellings for the men,—a task of no great difficulty, as the only requisite is protection from the sun and rains ; which is effected by a roof thatched with long grass from the swamps, or with “cahoon” leaves, or the branches of the thatch-palm. A hammock swung between two posts, two stones to support his kettle, and the hut of the cutter is both finished and furnished !

The mahogany season, which lasts some months, commences in August of each year ; it being the opinion of cutters that the wood is not then so apt to split in falling, nor so likely to “check” in seasoning, as when cut from April to August, in what is called “the spring.” Furthermore, by commencing at this period, the cutter is enabled to get down his wood, and prepare it for trucking by the setting in of the dry season.

The labourers are divided into gangs or companies, of from twenty to fifty each, under the direction of a leader styled a “captain,” who directs the men in his company, assigns them their daily tasks, and adds to or deducts from their wages in proportion as they accomplish more or less than what is supposed to be a just day’s work. Each gang has also one person connected with it who is called a hunter, whose duty it is to search the “bush” for trees proper to be cut. His work, therefore, commences somewhat earlier than that of the others ;

and, as it involves activity and intelligence, he is paid much higher wages than the mere cutters. His first movement is to cut his way through the thickest of the woods to some elevated situation, where he climbs the tallest tree he finds, from which he minutely surveys the surrounding country.

At this season of the year (August), the leaves of the mahogany tree are invariably of a yellow-reddish hue; and an eye accustomed to this kind of exercise can, at a great distance, discern the places where the wood is most abundant. He now descends, and to such places his steps are at once directed; and, without compass or other guide than what observation has imprinted on his recollection, he never fails to reach the exact spot at which he aims. On some occasions no ordinary stratagem is necessary to be resorted to by the huntsman, to prevent others from availing themselves of the advantage of his discoveries; for if his steps be traced by those who may be engaged in the same pursuit, which is a very common thing, all his ingenuity must be exerted to beguile them from the true track. In this, however, he is not always successful, being followed by those who are entirely aware of all the arts he may use, and whose eyes are so quick that the slightest turn of a leaf or the faintest impression of the foot is unerringly perceived; even the dried leaves which may be strewn upon the ground often help to conduct to the secret spot; and it consequently happens that persons so engaged must frequently undergo the disappointment of finding an advantage they had promised to themselves seized on by others. The hidden trea-

sure being, however, discovered, the next operation is the felling of a sufficient number of trees to employ the gang during the season.

The tree is commonly cut about ten or twelve feet from the ground, a stage being erected for the axe-man employed in levelling it. This, to an observer, would appear a labour of much danger, but an accident rarely happens to the people engaged in it. The trunk of the tree, from the dimensions of the wood it furnishes, is deemed most valuable; but for purposes of an ornamental kind the limbs or branches are generally preferred, their grain being much closer, and the veins richer and more variegated.

A sufficient number of trees being cut, the preparations for "trucking" commence by the opening of roads from the places where they lie to the nearest river. The length of road to be cut depends on the situation of the trees. When they are much dispersed, miles of roads and many bridges are required. A firm and well-graded main road is first built, from whence radiate numerous wing-roads. These are all built by task-work, and the principal amount of the labour of the cutters is expended upon them. The clearing away of the bushes and undergrowth is the work of one set of men, who are expected to clear one hundred yards per day. They are followed by another set, who cut down the larger trees as even with the ground as possible, the task being also one hundred yards per day to each labourer, although this is more difficult and laborious, from the number of hard woods growing here,—which, on failure of the

axe, are removed by the application of fire. The trunks of these trees—although many of them are valuable for other purposes, such as bullet-tree, iron-wood, red-wood, sapodilla, &c.—are thrown away as useless, unless they happen to be adjacent to some creek or small river which may intersect the road; in that case they are applied to the constructing of bridges across the same, which are frequently of considerable size, and require great labour to make them of sufficient strength to bear such immense loads as are taken over them.

The roads being finished generally by the month of December, the trees are sawn into logs of various lengths, in order to equalize the loads which the oxen have to draw. This being completed, the logs are separated the one from the other, and placed in whatever position will admit of the largest square being formed, according to the shape which the end of each log presents, and are then reduced, by means of the axe, from the round or natural form into "the square." Although some of the smaller logs are brought out in "the round," yet, with the larger description, the making them square is essential, not only to lessen their weight, but also to prevent their rolling on the truck or carriage.

In the months of April and May, all the various preparations having been completed, and the dry season having become sufficiently advanced, the "trucking" commences in earnest. This may be said to be the mahogany-cutter's harvest, as the result of his season's work depends upon a continuance of the dry weather; for a single shower of rain would materially injure his roads. The

number of trucks worked is proportioned to the strength of the gang, and the distance generally from six to ten miles. We will, for example, take a gang of forty men, capable of working six trucks, each of which requires seven pair of oxen and two drivers, sixteen to cut food for the cattle, and twelve to load or put the logs on the carriages; which latter usually take up a temporary residence somewhere near the main body of the wood, it being too far to go and return each day to the river side, or chief establishment. From the intense heat of the sun, the cattle would be unable to work during its influence; consequently they are obliged to use the night time in lieu of the day, the sultry effects of which it becomes requisite to avoid. The loaders, as before mentioned, being now at their stations in the forest, the trucks set off from the "embarcadero" about six o'clock in the evening, and arrive at their different places of loading about eleven or twelve o'clock at night. The loaders being at this time asleep, are warned of the approach of the trucks by the cracking of the whips carried by the cattle-drivers, which are heard at a considerable distance. They arise and commence placing the logs on the trucks; which is done by means of a temporary platform laid from the edge of the truck to a sufficient distance upon the ground, so as to make an inclined plane, upon which the log is gradually pushed up from each end alternately. Having completed their work of loading all the trucks, which may be done in three hours, they again retire to rest till about nine o'clock next morning. The drivers now set out on their return;

but their progress is considerably retarded by the loading, and, although well provided with torchlight, they are frequently impeded by small stumps that remain in the road, and which would be easily avoided in daylight; they, however, are in general all out at the river by eleven o'clock next morning, when, after throwing the logs into the river, having previously marked them on each end with the owner's initials, the cattle are fed, the drivers retire to rest until about sunset, when they feed the cattle a second time, and yoke in again.

Nothing can present a more extraordinary appearance than this process of trucking, or drawing down the mahogany to the river. The six trucks will occupy an extent of road of a quarter of a mile. The great number of oxen; the drivers half naked, clothes being inconvenient from the heat of the weather and the clouds of dust, and each bearing a lighted torch; the wildness of the forest scenery; the rattling of chains; the sound of the whip echoing through the woods; and the activity and exertion which so ill correspond with the silent hour of midnight,—all make it wear more the appearance of some theatrical exhibition than what it really is, the pursuit of industry which has fallen to the lot of the Honduras wood-cutter.

About the end of May the periodical rains again commence. The torrents of water discharged from the clouds are so great as to render the roads impassable in the course of a few hours, when all trucking ceases; the cattle are turned into the pasture, and the trucks, gear, tools, &c., are housed.

The rain now pours down incessantly till about the middle of June, when the rivers swell to an immense height. The logs then float down a distance of 200 miles, being followed by the gangs in pitpans, a kind of flat-bottomed canoe, to disengage them from the branches of the overhanging trees, until they are stopped by a boom placed in some situation convenient to the mouth of the river.

Each gang then separates its own cutting by the mark on the ends of the logs, and forms them into large rafts; in which state they are brought down to the wharves of the proprietors, where they are taken out of the water, and undergo a second process of the axe, to make the surface smooth. The ends, which frequently get split and rent by the force of the current, are also sawed off, when they are ready for shipping.

The wages paid in Belize by the English cutters on the eastern coast of Yucatan do not vary much from the prices common in Honduras. A "gang" there is understood to comprehend a "captain" and fifty men, divided into thirty first class, ten second class, and ten third class. The captain receives from 30 to 45 dollars per month, and the men 15, 12, and 10 dollars, according to their rank. The hunter for the gang has 15 dollars per month, or most frequently is paid at from half a dollar to a dollar for each tree he finds, according to its size and value. The men here, as in Honduras, are supplied with tools and rations, and receive their pay in the same relative proportion of goods and money.

Around Belize the mahogany-cutters are chiefly

Negroes, descendants of the slaves who were formerly employed there. But in Honduras they are principally Caribs, who in activity and strength are said to excel the Negroes; they are also more intelligent, and require less care and superintendence. Many of them go annually to Belize, and hire themselves for the season, returning to their homes at its close.

In reference to the mahogany trade of Honduras, as, indeed, in respect to every other branch of industry and commerce, we are absolutely without information both as to its amount and value. It may, nevertheless, be regarded as steadily increasing, and as promising to become every year more important, as the supplies of wood from the islands and from the peninsula of Yucatan diminish, and as the demand for it in the markets of the world is augmented. The principal establishments are now on the river Ulua and its branches, and on the Aguan, Black, and Patuca rivers. The other streams have been neglected, in consequence of the difficulty of floating down the wood, as well as of embarking it on an unprotected shore.

Besides the mahogany, Honduras supplies nearly every other variety of wood common to the tropics. Rose-wood is common on the northern coast, where it is beginning to become an article of commerce. Many dye-woods are found in the forests, and the trees producing gums and valuable medicines are not less abundant. The ceiba, or silk-cotton tree, is plentiful, and is distinguished for its vast size, which leads to its common use for boats. Boats are sometimes hollowed from a single trunk, which would measure

seven feet clear between the sides. This tree blossoms two or three times a-year, when its carnation flowers give a bloom to an entire forest. It produces a pod containing a kind of downy fibre or cotton, which is sometimes used to stuff cushions and pillows, and may possibly be made useful for other purposes.

Many varieties of oaks and of palm trees are more or less abundant, besides the lime, lemon, orange,



THE GUAVA.

palm, and cocoa trees, all indigenous to the country. The guava, the mango, and other fruits, are abundant. The cotton plant, the sugar cane, and the coffee tree, all flourish in Honduras. Maize grows luxuriantly. This grain may be called the "staff of life"



MAIZE.

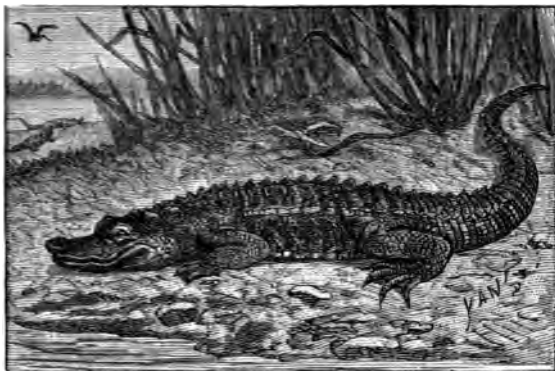
in that climate, as, made into tortillas and other forms of food, it constitutes the chief support of the people. This useful grain suffers much from the depredations of the *chapulin* or flying grasshopper, which comes in such clouds as to destroy many flourishing fields in a few hours. These insects sometimes come in such numbers as to darken the air, and destroy every green thing in their course. Mr. Squier says, "I once rode through one of these columns which was fully ten miles in width. Not only did the insects cover the ground, rising in clouds on

each side of the mule-path as I advanced, but the open pine forest was brown with their myriad bodies, as if the trees had been seared with fire, while the air was filled with them, as it is with falling flakes in a snow storm. Their course is always from south to north. They make their first appearance as *saltones*, of diminutive size, red bodies, and wingless, when they swarm over the ground like ants. At this time vast numbers of them are killed by the natives, who dig long trenches, two or three feet deep, and drive the *saltones* into them. Unable to leap out, the trench soon becomes half filled with the young insects, when the earth is shovelled back, and they are thus buried and destroyed. They are often driven, in this way, into the rivers and drowned. Various expedients are resorted to by the owners of plantations to prevent the passing columns from alighting. Sulphur is burned in the field, guns are fired, drums beaten, and every mode of making a noise put in requisition for the purpose. In this mode detached plantations are often saved. But when the columns once alight, no device can avail to rescue them from speedy desolation. In a single hour the largest maize fields are stripped of their leaves, and only the stems are left to indicate that they once existed.

"It is said that the chapulin makes its appearance at the end of periods of about fifty years, and that it then prevails for from five to seven years, when it entirely disappears. But its habits have never been studied with care, and I am unprepared to affirm anything in these respects. Its ordinary size is from two and a half to four inches in length, but it sometimes grows to the length of five inches."

Wheat and potatoes are cultivated on the higher plateaus; elsewhere the yam, plantains, bananas, and the variety of beans called *frijoles*, are abundant. Rice grows well, and is largely used near the coasts.

Wild animals of all kinds are numerous. "Birds of brilliant plumage sparkle in the foliage of the trees, and crowds of monkeys troop among their branches. The tapir, the peccary, and the anteater live in their shade, and the puma and the



THE ALLIGATOR.

cougar lurk in their recesses. The alligator is found in all the lagoons and rivers on both coasts. It attains the size of fifteen feet in length. It avoids the neighbourhood of man, and generally abandons the streams as their banks become inhabited. Of the lizard tribe there are infinite varieties. The most remarkable is the iguana, which sometimes attains three or four feet in length. It is bluish-grey in colour, and lives almost exclusively on the blossoms of trees. Its bite is painful, but not

dangerous. The flesh is much valued by many persons, being reckoned as delicate as chicken, and but little inferior to turtle in flavour." "The ugly-looking tree lizard," says Mr. Simmonds, "which looks like an alligator in miniature, is considered a great delicacy in most tropical countries. However white and tender the flesh may be when cooked, when one of its fore paws happens to stick up in the dish, it reminds one too much of the alligator to eat it with any great relish. I know no animal, or rather reptile, whose appearance is so little calculated to tempt man to eat of its flesh, and yet, despite the repugnance that results from its looks, neither Ude nor Soyer could have compounded any dish that could compare to the delicacy of a well-dressed iguana."

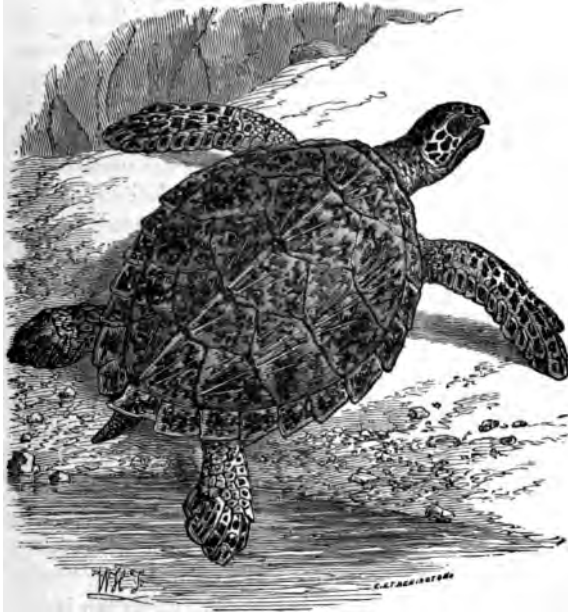
It was long before the Spaniards could conquer their repugnance to the iguana or guana, the favourite delicacy of the Indians, but which the former regarded with disgust as a species of serpent. They found it, however, to be highly palatable and delicate, and from that time forward the guana was held in repute among Spanish epicures. The eggs of the iguana are also used as food.

Pierre Labat gives a minute account of the mode of catching this reptile. "We were attended," says he, "by a negro who carried a long rod, at one end of which was a piece of whiplash with a running knot. After beating the bushes for some time, the negro discovered our game basking in the sun on the dry limb of a tree. Hereupon he began whistling with all his might; to which the guana was wonderfully attentive, stretching out his neck, and

turning his head, as if to enjoy it more fully. The negro now approached, still whistling, and advancing his rod gently, began tickling with the end of it the sides and throat of the guana, who seemed mightily pleased with the operation, for he turned on his back and stretched himself out like a cat before the fire, and at length fell fairly asleep; which the negro perceiving, dexterously slipped the noose over his head, and with a jerk brought him to the ground; and good sport it afforded to see the creature swell like a turkey-cock at finding himself entrapped. We caught others in the same way, and kept one of them alive seven or eight days; but," continues the reverend historian, "it grieved me to the heart to find that he thereby lost much delicious fat."

Chief-Justice Temple of Honduras speaks of another animal, unknown in Europe, the liver of which is considered a delicacy in Honduras. He says, "Another article which might be preserved and exported, and which would, I have little doubt, be highly prized by epicures in England, is the liver of the hiccatee. The hiccatee is the fresh-water turtle or tortoise, and is, I believe, altogether unknown in Europe. It never approaches anything like the size of the large turtle. The weight of the hiccatee seldom exceeds 20 lbs. It has not got fins like a turtle, or, to be more correct, the sea tortoise, but round, webbed feet, each having five claws, like those of a duck. It is made for the land, therefore, as well as for the water. It does not, however, make the former its home, and its feet are evidently intended merely to enable it, when one pool be-

comes dry, to travel in search of another. The hiccatee is generally caught in the dry season, when



TURTLE.

going across the country in pursuit of water. The feet when dressed are gelatinous, but the flesh is dry and fibrous. It is, however, the liver which renders this species of tortoise so highly estimable. It is of a dark-olive colour, and immensely large. If this were preserved in oil with truffles, it would be considered far superior to the goose's liver, of which the *pâté de foie gras* is made."

The varieties of sea turtle familiarly known as green turtle (*Chelonia Midas*) and hawk's-bill turtle (*C. Caretta*) are abundant on both coasts, and furnish a large supply of food, and a principal source of wealth to the Indians. From the variety known as hawk's-bill is taken the best tortoise-shell of commerce. There is still another species, which grows to a larger size than either of those already enumerated, called the trunk turtle. Its flesh is not used, nor is its shell of good quality. A kind of oil, which is much valued, is extracted from this turtle, and, it is supposed, might be made a considerable article of trade.

Serpents of various kinds are found in Honduras, but they are chiefly confined to the coasts. "For the most part they are harmless," says Mr. Müller, "and they are seen by the natives in their houses rather with pleasure than alarm or disgust, since they are useful in the destruction of vermin. The harmless snakes have generally rounded spots on the head, angular marks under the tail and belly, while the body is covered with oval scales. The upper jaw, as in mammalia, is set in its entire length with sharp, wedge-shaped, solid teeth; and from the junction of the jaws springs another row. The under jaw is furnished in the same manner; so that, in opening the mouth, four rows of teeth are seen. The harmless snakes are, in general, long and slender in body, the head is handsomer, and the scales are smoother. In our journeys through the forests we observed several of these, and especially one large kind, of bluish-white colour, which we were unable to catch, as it disappeared rapidly when we approached it. This kind is named by the Indians *woulah*; and they say that,

though it steals fowls, it destroys the smaller varieties of poisonous snakes. The venomous serpents are distinguished by a thicker body and shorter tail, a broad head covered with scales, and more especially by the poison-fangs, which are sharp, provided with a channel and an opening at the upper end, not at the top, but at the side, for the exit of the poison. Behind these fangs lie several smaller teeth, but they are concealed in a fold of muscle. As we had no opportunity to see or investigate any such specimens, although the Indians, in hopes of reward, hunted several times in vain for us, we must content ourselves with repeating the ordinary names in use there. There is the golden snake, the whip snake, tamagas, and barber's-pole. The two latter are the most dangerous, and their bite destroys life. According to experience, the root of the guaco is a reliable remedy for the bite of a snake. It is found almost everywhere, especially on the island of Roatan. The number of serpents is perceptibly diminished by the advance of cultivation."

In respect of mineral wealth, Honduras ranks first among all the states of Central America. There are mines of gold and silver, copper, iron, and platina. Coal has been discovered in several places.

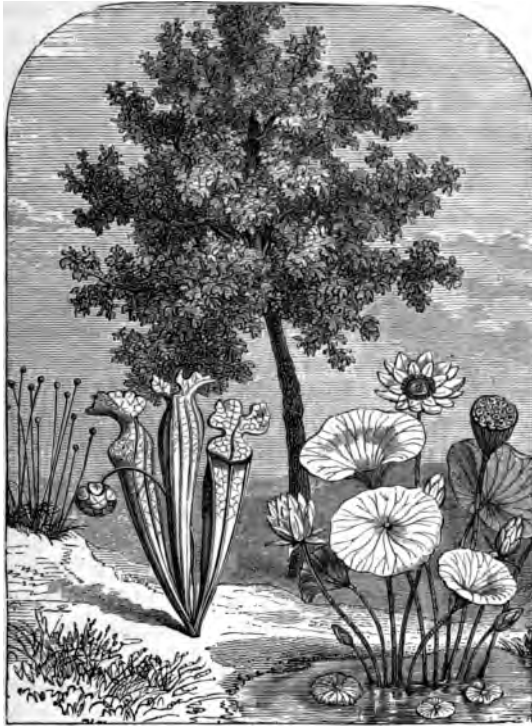
The chief ports of Honduras on the Atlantic Ocean are Omoa, Puerto Caballos, and Truxillo. The following description of Truxillo, which gives a good idea of the appearance of the town and neighbourhood, is taken from the narrative of Mr. Montgomery, United States Commissioner to Central America :—

"The principal street—and, strictly speaking, the only one, for the others scarcely deserve the

name—extends from one end of the town to the other, and is paved. The houses, for the most part, are but one storey high; and their sombre, dilapidated appearance, together with the grass-grown pavement, imparts to the place a melancholy air of abandonment. It has, at the same time, something romantic in its situation, being enclosed by mountains, and embosomed in an exuberant vegetation, which the efforts of man seem to have been unable to check.

“There is scarcely any open ground in the vicinity, except here and there a cultivated spot, where the plantain, the yucca, and a little corn, are raised for individual consumption. As the woods afford a rich pasture, the cattle are good, and milk is abundant; and as the soil, by its fertility, liberally repays the little labour bestowed on it, the very moderate wants of the inhabitants are easily supplied.

“During my stay in Truxillo I took a ramble in the woods, accompanied by the captain of the vessel. There is a brook in the neighbourhood of the town, which pursues a winding course through the woods, and among the rocks, until it falls into the sea. We resolved to explore its banks as far as circumstances might permit. We set out, accordingly, each of us armed with a stout stick, in the apprehension of encountering snakes. Indeed, so exaggerated were the accounts I had received of the number of these reptiles infesting the woods, that I had conceived it impossible to move a step without danger of being attacked by them. As we proceeded in our excursion, I was agreeably sur-



THE SASSAFRAS-TREE.

prised by the beauty of the scenery. The size and loftiness of the trees, some of them in blossom, and the deep verdure of their foliage, surpassed anything I had ever seen of the kind. There was the tamarind tree, the wild lemon, loaded with fruit, and the sassafras. There, too, was the mahogany tree, which, like the sassafras, furnishes a staple com-

modity of the country, and a variety of other trees, with whose properties and names we were wholly unacquainted. There was a vast number of plants also, that seemed to me curious, and well worth the attention of a botanist. Parrots, pelicans, and other birds of brilliant plumage, were flying all around us; there were singing birds among the trees; while in the limpid waters of the brook might be seen, now and then, the silvery sides of a fish glistening in the sun as it darted across the stream. The brook sometimes rushed and foamed noisily among groups of rocks, or through narrow passes, and at other times glided peacefully on, with an almost imperceptible current. At one place a little bay was formed, deep and cool, where the smooth and placid surface of the water, which was beautifully transparent, reflected, as in a mirror, the overhanging trees. It was impossible not to be affected by the solitude and beauty of the scene; the charm was felt and acknowledged by my companion as well as myself. A pleasant breeze blowing at the time, effectually prevented our being annoyed by mosquitoes; and, singular as it seemed to me, we met with no snake, nor any dangerous animal in our path."

Honduras has also the free port of Amapalla, on the island of Tigre, which occupies a commanding position nearly in the centre of the Bay of Fonseca. Mr. Squier says that this beautiful bay is one of the finest ports, or rather constellation of ports, on the entire Pacific coast of this continent.

The city of Comayagua, situated in the plain of that name, is the capital of Honduras. It was

founded in 1540 by Alonzo Caceres, in obedience to instructions "to find out an eligible situation for a town midway between the oceans." It now contains between 7000 and 8000 inhabitants. Previous to 1827 it had about 18000, and was adorned with fountains and monuments. In that year it was taken and burned by the monarchical faction of Guatemala, and has never been able wholly to recover from the shock.

There are many towns and villages inhabited entirely by Indians. The following account by Young of an Indian village which he visited on one of the tributaries of the Black River, will give a good idea of the condition and mode of life of the Indians in general:—

"The Indian town, to my astonishment, was comprised in one large house, of an oval form, about 85 feet in length, and 35 feet wide, in which all the natives resided, truly in the patriarchal style. Crickeries were erected all around, close to each other, separated by two or three cabbage boards, each family having one of these compartments.

"On our entrance the women were busily occupied, some pounding cassada and Indian corn together, boiling it, and making it into a beverage called oulung; some preparing cassada for bread in the morning; others making tournous; others, again, rubbing cacao, and squeezing sugar-cane; in truth, the whole of them were most busily employed, under the management of the chief's wife,—the chief, who is called by the English name of officer, being absent. We were looked upon with a quiet sort of wonder, the women merely gazing for a few minutes upon

the white men, of whom, perhaps, they had heard much, and then they resumed their pounding, boiling, and beating. The oulung is a beverage not to be despised on a warm day by those who do not mind a particularly sour taste. After the second time of tasting it, I sought it with pleasure. Their bread, too, is sour; but even that I relished. It is made of pounded cassada into rolls about 15 or 16 inches in length, and about the thickness of a man's wrist. It is then wrapped round with several layers of leaves, and slowly barbecued until done. When eaten fresh, it is good, the sour taste being acquired by keeping. The house is thatched in a very neat manner with swallow-tail leaf to about four feet from the ground; so that the rain, however violent, does not trouble them. They are noted for cleanliness. The situation was well chosen; and a few yards from the house, down a steep pass, was a stream of water, forming innumerable cascades as it ran leaping and dashing over the huge blocks of stone with which it abounded. Here, as we sat, our ears drank in with delight the soothing sound of the water; and we beheld, with extreme gratification, the verdant hills, the rich plumage of birds as they flew by, and heard the chattering monkeys filling the wood with their noise. I observed around the house numerous fowls, a few Muscovy ducks, turkeys, and pigs; and they can, in general, obtain game by a little exertion in hunting. The peccary, which inhabits high and dry places, often falls here before the superior dexterity and cunning of man. Waree* are not found on the Poyer Mountains, so

* The Waree (*Sus Americensis*) is supposed to be the ordinary hog run wild.

that the Indians sometimes form a party, and descend to one of the hunting passes in the Black River, or such places as they are known to frequent. Very few of them have guns; they merely go armed with a lance, and bow and arrow; but they rarely return without a noble supply of barbecued meat.

"After partaking of a couple of fowls, some cassada and plantains, cacao, and boiled cane-juice, prepared for us by these kind people, we betook ourselves to repose. Early in the morning, while in my hammock, an Indian woman timidly touched me, saying, 'Englis,' at the same time presenting me with a hot roll of bread, nicely done up in fresh leaves; another soon came to me with a bundle of oulung; and so it continued, until I had three or four bundles of oulung, and nine large rolls of bread! In return, I presented them with a little tobacco, some needles, and salt, and gave a clasp knife to the officer's wife. Soon after I was agreeably surprised by several of the men arriving from the plantations loaded with sugar-cane, plantains, cacao, &c.; which we very willingly received in exchange for a few hooks, needles, &c. On inquiry, I learned that there was another town, about fifteen miles off, judging from the rate they travel in an hour, and in the route to the Spanish country. Before our departure, a number of Indians came from the neighbouring town, having been apprised of our arrival, bringing sarsaparilla to trade with for osnaburg; but we not having that, or cloth of any kind, they were compelled to carry their heavy burdens back."



CHAPTER VII.

THE RUINED CITIES IN HONDURAS.

Number of ruined cities visited by Mr. Stephens—His visit to Copan—Description of ruins—Procession of Monkeys—Mysterious origin of these cities—A lodging in a hut—Clearing the trees away round an idol—Purchase of the ruins—Further description—Discomforts in the hut—Tortillas—Visit to the quarries.

IN the almost impenetrable depths of the forests of Central America are to be seen the ruins of large cities, with sculptured images, massive walls, altars to gods unknown, the remains of temples and palaces, covered with inscriptions that none can now read—their builders and their history alike mysterious and unknown. These cities had been mentioned by old Spanish writers, but were not explored and described till they were visited by Mr. Stephens, the well-known American author, who in 1839 and in 1842 published the result of his researches, illustrated by engravings from drawings made on the spot. In the course of his journeys through Honduras, Chiapas, Tabasco, and Yucatan, Mr. Stephens saw no fewer than forty-four ruined cities, the greater number of which are in Yucatan. The first of those which he visited in Central America was the ruined city of Copan, situated in the province of

Gracias in Honduras; and some account of this may give an idea of the others, as they strongly resemble each other, though varying in many of their minor features.

Before Mr. Stephens explored the ruins of Copan, they were not known even to the villagers who lived on the edge of the forest in which they were hid; and it was with the greatest difficulty he could find a guide to point out to him in what direction to look for them. When he and his companions reached the bank of the river Copan, they saw, directly opposite, a stone wall, perhaps a hundred feet high, with furze growing out of the top, running north and south along the river, in some places fallen, but in others entire. This was their first sight of the wall of Copan. It was so overgrown with trees and brushwood, that as they advanced, their guide had to clear a way for them by cutting the branches.

“The wall was of cut stone, well laid, and in a good state of preservation. We ascended by large stone steps, in some places perfect, and in others thrown down by trees which had grown up between the crevices, and reached a terrace, the form of which it was impossible to make out, from the density of the forest in which it was enveloped. Our guide cleared a way with his machete, and we passed, as it lay half buried in the earth, a large fragment of stone elaborately sculptured, and came to the angle of a structure with steps on the sides, in form and appearance, so far as the trees would enable us to make it out, like the sides of a pyramid. Diverging from the base, and working our way through the thick woods, we came upon a

square stone column, about fourteen feet high, and three feet on each side, sculptured in very bold relief, and on all four of the sides, from the base to the top. The front was the figure of a man curiously and richly dressed; and the face, evidently a portrait, solemn, stern, and well fitted to excite terror. The back was of a different design, unlike anything we had ever seen before; and the sides were covered with hieroglyphics. This our guide called an idol. And before it, at a distance of three feet, was a large block of stone, also sculptured with figures and emblematical devices, which he called an altar. The sight of this unexpected monument put at rest at once and for ever, in our minds, all uncertainty in regard to the character of American antiquities, and gave us the assurance that the objects we were in search of were interesting, not only as the remains of an unknown people, but as works of art, proving, like newly-discovered historical records, that the people who once occupied the continent of America were not savages. With an interest perhaps stronger than we had ever felt in wandering among the ruins of Egypt, we followed our guide, who, sometimes missing his way, with a constant and vigorous use of his machete, conducted us through the thick forest, among half-buried fragments, to fourteen monuments of the same character and appearance, some with more elegant designs, and some in workmanship equal to the finest monuments of the Egyptians; one displaced from its pedestal by enormous roots; another locked in the close embrace of branches of trees, and almost lifted out of the earth; another hurled to the

v

ground, and bound down by huge vines and creepers; and one standing with its altar before it, in a grove of trees which grew around it, seemingly to shade and shroud it as a sacred thing. In the solemn stillness of the woods it seemed a divinity mourning over a fallen people.

"The only sounds that disturbed the quiet of this buried city were the noise of monkeys moving among the tops of the trees, and the cracking of dry branches broken by their weight. They moved over our heads in long and swift processions—forty or fifty at a time; some with little ones wound in their long arms, walking out to the end of boughs, and holding on with their hind feet, or a curl of the tail, sprang to a branch of the next tree, and with a noise like a current of wind, passed on into the depths of the forest. It was the first time we had seen these mockeries of humanity, and, with the strange monuments around us, they seemed like wandering spirits of the departed race guarding the ruins of their former habitations.

"We returned to the base of the pyramidal structure, and ascended by regular stone steps, in some places forced apart by bushes and saplings, and in others thrown down by the growth of large trees, while some remained entire. In parts they were ornamented with sculptured figures and rows of Death's heads. Climbing over the ruined top, we reached a terrace overgrown with trees; and, crossing it, descended by stone steps into an area so covered with trees that at first we could not make out its form, but which, on clearing the way with the machete, we ascertained to be a square, and

with steps on all the sides almost as perfect as those of the Roman amphitheatre. The steps were ornamented with sculpture; and on the south side, about half way up, forced out of its place by roots, was a colossal head, evidently a portrait. We ascended these steps, and reached a broad terrace a hundred feet high, overlooking the river, and supported by the wall which we had seen from the opposite bank. The whole terrace was covered with trees; and even at this height from the ground were two gigantic ceibas, or wild cotton trees of India, above twenty feet in circumference, extending their half-naked roots fifty or a hundred feet around, binding down the ruins, and shading them with their wide-spreading branches. We sat down on the very edge of the wall, and strove in vain to penetrate the mystery by which we were surrounded. Who were the people that built this city? In the ruined cities of Egypt, even in the long-lost Petra, the stranger knows the story of the people whose vestiges are around him. America, say historians, was peopled by savages; but savages never reared these structures, savages never carved these stones. We asked the Indians who made them, and their dull answer was, 'Quien sabe?'—'Who knows?'

"There were no associations connected with the place; none of those stirring recollections which hallow Rome, Athens, and—

'The world's great mistress on the Egyptian plain.

But architecture, sculpture, and painting, all the arts which embellish life, had flourished in this overgrown forest; orators, warriors, and statesmen,

beauty, ambition, and glory, had lived and passed away ; and none knew that such things had been, or could tell of their past existence. Books, the records of knowledge, are silent on this theme. The city was desolate. No remnant of this race hangs round the ruins, with traditions handed down from father to son, and from generation to generation. It lay before us like a shattered bark in the midst of the ocean, her masts gone, her name effaced, her crew perished, and none to tell whence she came, to whom she belonged, how long on her voyage, or what caused her destruction ; her lost people to be traced only by some fancied resemblance in the construction of the vessel, and perhaps never to be known at all. The place where we sat, was it a citadel, from which an unknown people had sounded the trumpet of war ; or a temple, for the worship of the God of peace ? Or did the inhabitants worship the idols made with their own hands, and offer sacrifices on the stones before them ? All was mystery, dark, impenetrable mystery, and every circumstance increased it. In Egypt, the colossal skeletons of gigantic temples stand in the unwatered sands, in all the nakedness of desolation ; here, an immense forest shrouded the ruins, hiding them from sight, heightening the impression and moral effect, and giving an intensity and almost wildness to the interest."

Mr. Stephens and Mr. Catherwood with some difficulty procured a lodging in a hut in the village of Copan, of the most primitive kind. The hut stood on the edge of a clearing, on the ground once covered by the city, with a stone fragment, hollowed

out and used as a drinking-vessel for cattle, almost at the very door. The clearing ~~was~~ planted with corn and tobacco, and bounded on each side by the forest. The hut was about sixteen feet square, with a peaked roof thatched with husks of Indian corn, made by setting in the ground two upright poles with crotches, in which another pole was laid to support the peak of the roof, and similar supports on each side; but only about four feet high. The gable end was the front, and one half of it was thatched with corn leaves, while the other remained open. The back part was thatched, and piled up against it was Indian corn three ears deep. On one side the pile was unbroken, but on the other it was used down to within three or four feet of the ground. In the corner in front was the bed of Don Miguel and his wife, protected by a bull's-hide, fastened at the head and side. The furniture consisted of a stone roller for mashing corn, and a comal or earthen griddle for baking tortillas; and on a rude shelf over the bed were two boxes, which contained the wardrobe and all the property of Don Miguel and his wife. There was only room enough for one hammock, and, in fact, the cross-sticks were not strong enough to support two men. The pile of corn which had been used down was just high and broad enough for a bed. By consent, I took this for my sleeping place, and Mr. Catherwood hung up his hammock.

Neither discomfort nor any other discouragement could deter Mr. Stephens from his resolution to explore and procure drawings of the ruins. By degrees he and his friend gained the good-will of the

people, by prescribing for some of the sick among them; and it was by this means that they were admitted into the cottage we have described, where they had found a woman lying,—rolling and tossing on a bull's-hide bed, wild with fever and pain,—for whom Mr. Catherwood prescribed.

Mr. Stephens, having established himself in the village and procured workmen, proceeded to explore the ruins; but he soon found that the woods were so dense that it was almost hopeless to think of penetrating them. Before any drawing could be made, the objects to be drawn must be cleared, for the foliage was so thick and the shade so deep that drawing them as they were was impossible.

“After much consultation,” says Mr. Stephens, “we selected one of the idols, and determined to cut down the trees around it, and thus lay it open to the rays of the sun. Here again was difficulty. There was no axe; and the only instrument which the Indians possessed was the machete, or chopping-knife, which varies in form in different sections of the country. Wielded with one hand, it was useful in clearing away shrubs and branches, but almost harmless upon large trees; and the Indians, as in the days when the Spaniards discovered them, applied to work without ardour, carried it on with little activity, and, like children, were easily diverted from it. One hacked into a tree, and when tired, which happened very soon, sat down to rest, and another relieved him. While one worked, there were always several looking on. I remembered the ring of the woodman's axe in the forests at home, and wished for a few of the labourers I had known there. However, even

the slow work of the Indians was successful in time."

"It is impossible to describe the interest with which I explored these ruins. The ground was entirely new. There were no guide-books or guides; the whole was a virgin soil. We could not see ten yards before us, and never knew what we should stumble upon next. At one time we stopped to cut away branches and vines which concealed the face of a monument, and then to dig around and bring to light a fragment, a sculptured corner of which protruded from the earth. I leaned over with breathless anxiety while the Indians worked, and an eye, an ear, a foot, or a hand was disentombed; and when the machete rang against the chiselled stone, I pushed the Indians away, and cleared out the loose earth with my hands. The beauty of the sculpture—the solemn stillness of the woods, disturbed only by the scrambling of monkeys and the chattering of parrots—the desolation of the city and the mystery that hung over it—all created an interest higher, if possible, than I had ever felt among the ruins of the Old World."

Notwithstanding the diligence with which they worked, Mr. Stephens soon became aware that it was uncertain how long they might be permitted to explore and make drawings as they were then doing. A villager of Copan, Don Jose Maria by name, had introduced himself to them as the owner of the ruins, and produced a title-deed, which seemed to be good. Mr. Stephens resolved to buy them from him, if possible.

"Mr. Catherwood went to the ruins to continue

his drawing," says Mr. Stephens, "and I to the village. My first visit was to Don Jose Maria." "I broached the subject of a purchase of the ruins; told him that, on account of my public business, I could not remain as long as I desired, but wished to return with spades, pickaxes, ladders, crowbars, and men, build a hut to live in, and make a thorough exploration; that I could not incur the expense at the risk of being refused permission to do so; and, in short, in plain English, asked him, What will you take for the ruins? I think he was not more surprised than if I had asked to buy his poor old wife, our rheumatic patient, to practise medicine upon. He seemed to doubt which of us was out of his senses. The property was so utterly worthless, that my wanting to buy it seemed very suspicious. On examining the paper, I found that he did not own the fee, but held under a lease from Don Bernardo de Aguila, of which three years were unexpired. The tract consisted of about six thousand acres, for which he paid eighty dollars a-year. He was at a loss what to do, but told me that he would reflect upon it, consult his wife, and give me an answer at the hut the next day.

"The next morning he came, and his condition was truly pitiable. He was anxious to convert unproductive property into money, but afraid, and said that I was a stranger, and it might bring him into difficulty with the government. I again went into proof of character, and engaged to save him harmless with the government, or release him. Don Miguel read my letters of recommendation, and re-read the letter of General Cascara. He was

convinced, but these papers did not give him a right to sell me his land,—the shade of suspicion still lingered; for a finale, I opened my trunk and put on a diplomatic coat, with a profusion of large eagle buttons. I had on a Panama hat soaked with rain and spotted with mud, a check shirt, white pantaloons, yellow up to the knees with mud, and was about as *outré* as the negro king who received a company of British officers on the coast of Africa in a cocked hat and military coat, without any inexpressibles. But Don Jose Maria could not withstand the buttons on my coat; the cloth was the finest he had ever seen; and Don Miguel, and his wife, and Bartolo realized fully that they had in their hut an illustrious incognito. The only question was, who should find paper on which to draw the contract? I did not stand upon trifles, and gave Don Miguel some paper, who took our mutual instructions, and appointed the next day for the execution of the deed.

“The reader is perhaps curious to know how old cities sell in Central America. Like other articles of trade, they are regulated by the quantity in market and the demand; but, not being staple articles, like cotton and indigo, they were held at fancy prices, and at that time were dull of sale. I paid fifty dollars for Copan. There was never any difficulty about price. I offered that sum, for which Don Jose Maria thought me only a fool; if I had offered more, he would probably have considered me something worse.”

“The ruined city of Copan lies in the district of country now known as the State of Honduras,

one of the most fertile valleys in Central America. The ruins are on the left bank of the Copan river, which empties into the Motagua, and so passes into the Bay of Honduras, near Omoa, distant, perhaps, three hundred miles from the sea. The Copan river is not navigable even for canoes, except for a short time in the rainy season. Falls interrupt its course before it empties into the Motagua. Cortez, in his terrible journey from Mexico to Honduras, of the hardships of which, even now, when the country is comparatively open, and free from masses of enemies, it is difficult to form a conception, must have passed within two days' march of this city.

The extent along the river, as ascertained by monuments still found, is more than two miles. There is one monument on the opposite side of the river, at the distance of a mile, on the top of a mountain 2000 feet high. Whether the city ever crossed the river, and extended to that monument, it is impossible to say. I believe not. At the rear is an unexplored forest, in which there may be ruins. There are no remains of palaces or private buildings, and the principal part is that which stands on the bank of the river, and may, perhaps, with propriety, be called the Temple.

"This temple is an oblong enclosure. The front or river wall extends on a right line, north and south, 624 feet; and it is from 60 to 90 feet in height. It is made of cut stones, from 3 to 6 feet in length, and a foot and a half in breadth. In many places the stones have been thrown down by bushes growing out of the crevices; and in one place

there is a small opening, from which the ruins are sometimes called by the Indians *Las Ventanas*, or 'the windows.' The other three sides consist of ranges of steps and pyramidal structures, rising from 30 to 140 feet in height on the slope. The whole line of survey is 2866 feet; which, though gigantic and extraordinary for a ruined structure of the aborigines, that the reader's imagination may not mislead him, I consider it necessary to say, is not so large as the base of the Great Pyramid of Ghizeh.

"I have omitted," continues Mr. Stephens, "the particulars of our survey; the difficulty and labour of opening lines through the trees, climbing up the sides of the ruined pyramids, measuring steps, and the aggravation of all these from our want of materials and help, and our imperfect knowledge of the language. The people of Copan could not comprehend what we were about, and thought we were practising some black art to discover hidden treasure. Bruno and Francisco, our principal coadjutors, were completely mystified; and even the monkeys seemed embarrassed and confused. These counterfeit presentments of ourselves aided not a little in keeping alive the strange interest that hung over the place. They had no 'monkey tricks,' but were grave and solemn, as if officiating as the guardians of consecrated ground. In the morning they were quiet, but in the afternoon they came out for a promenade on the tops of the trees; and sometimes as they looked steadfastly at us, they seemed on the point of asking us why we disturbed the repose of the ruins. I have omitted, too, what aggravated our

hardships and disturbed our sentiment,—apprehension from scorpions, and bites of moschetoës and garrapatas, or ticks, the latter of which, in spite of precautions (pantaloons tied tight over our boots, and coats buttoned close in the throat), got under our clothes, and buried themselves in the flesh. At night, moreover, the hut of Don Miguel was alive with fleas; to protect ourselves against which, on the third night of our arrival, we sewed up the sides and one end of our sheets, and thrust ourselves into them as we would into a sack. And while in the way of mentioning our troubles, I may add, that during this time the flour of the hacienda gave out; we were cut off from bread, and brought down to tortillas. This is the bread of Central and all Spanish America, and the only species to be found except in the principal towns.”

On a former occasion Mr. Stephens had seen a family engaged in making tortillas, and thus describes the process :—“ At one end of the *cucinera* was an elevation, on which stood a comal, or griddle, resting on three stones, with a fire blazing under it. The daughter-in-law had before her an earthen vessel containing Indian corn, soaked in lime-water to remove the husk; and placing a handful on an oblong stone curving inward, mashed it with a stone roller into a thick paste. The girls took it as it was mashed, and patting it with their hands into flat cakes, laid them on the griddle to bake. This is repeated for every meal, and a great part of the business of the women consists in making tortillas.”

“ The day after our survey was finished, as a relief

we set out for a walk to the old stone quarries of Copan. Very soon we abandoned the path along the river, and turned off to the left. The ground was broken, the forest thick, and all the way we had an Indian before us with his machete, cutting down branches and saplings. The range lies about two miles north from the river, and runs east and west. At the foot of it we crossed a wild stream. The side of the mountain was overgrown with bushes and trees. The top was bare, and commanded a magnificent view of a dense forest, broken only by the winding of the Copan river, and the clearings for the haciendas of Don Gregorio and Don Miguel. The city was buried in forest, and entirely hidden from sight. Imagination peopled the quarry with workmen, and laid bare the city to their view. Here, as the sculptor worked, he turned to the theatre of his glory, as the Greek did to the Acropolis of Athens, and dreamt of immortal fame. Little did he imagine that the time would come when his works would perish, his race be extinct, his city a desolation and abode for reptiles, for strangers to gaze at, and wonder by what race it had once been inhabited."

"The stone is of a soft grit. The range extended a long distance, seemingly unconscious that stone enough had been taken from its sides to build a city. How the huge masses were transported over the irregular and broken surface we had crossed, and particularly how one of them was set up on the top of a mountain 2000 feet high, it was impossible to conjecture. In many places were blocks which had been quarried out and rejected for some de-

fect; and at one spot, midway in a ravine leading toward the river, was a gigantic block, much larger than any we saw in the city; which was probably on its way thither, to be carved and set up as an ornament, when the labours of the workmen were arrested. It remains as a memorial of baffled human plans.

“Of the moral effects of the monuments themselves, standing as they do in the depths of a tropical forest—silent and solemn, strange in design, excellent in sculpture, rich in ornament—different from the works of any other people—their use and purposes, their whole history so entirely unknown—with hieroglyphics explaining all, but perfectly unintelligible—I shall not pretend to convey any idea. Often the imagination was pained in gazing at them.”

“In regard to the age of this desolate city, I shall not at present offer any conjecture. Some idea might, perhaps, be formed from the accumulations of earth and the gigantic trees growing on the top of the ruined structures; but it would be uncertain and unsatisfactory. Nor shall I at this moment offer any conjecture in regard to the people who built it, or to the time when, or the means by which it was depopulated, and became a desolation and ruin—whether it fell by the sword, or famine, or pestilence. The trees which shroud it may have sprung from the blood of its slaughtered inhabitants; they may have perished howling with hunger; or pestilence, like the cholera, may have piled its streets with dead, and driven for ever the feeble remnants from their homes;—of which dire calamities to other cities

we have authentic accounts, in eras both prior and subsequent to the discovery of the country by the Spaniards. One thing I believe—that its history is graven on its monuments. No Champollion has yet brought to them the energies of his inquiring mind. Who shall read them ?”

‘Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O’er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, Here was, or is, where all is doubly night?’

CHANGE SWEEPETH OVER ALL.

Change sweepeth over all!
In showers, leaves fall
From the tall forest tree;
On to the sea
Majestic rivers roll—
It is their goal.
Each speeds to perish, in man’s simple meaning—
Each disappears;
One common end o’ertakes life’s idle dreaming—
Dust, darkness, tears.

O’er cities of old days
Dumb creatures graze;
Palace and pyramid
In dust are hid;
Yea, the sky-searching tower
Stands but its hour.
Oceans their wide-stretched beds are ever shifting —
Sea turns to shore;
And stars and systems through dread space are drifting.
To shine no more.





CHAPTER VIII

NICARAGUA.

Description of Nicaragua—Life in Granada—Chocollitos—A parrot devoured by a deer—Ant engineers—Slave-holding ants—Leon—Men attacked by wasps—A rat-catching snake—A monkey family—A jicaral—A philosopher in a thunder-storm—A voyage on the San Juan—Mr. Roberts tried as a spy—Condemned to be shot—Unexpectedly saved—Parties in Nicaragua—General Muñoz—Fruto Chamorro.

THE state of Nicaragua is exceedingly fertile, and generally salubrious. But, notwithstanding it possesses several advantages over Honduras, it is but little more populous. This may partly be accounted for by the absence of any leading branch of industry, or any considerable activity in its commerce, but still more by its frequent civil wars. In a land surpassingly volcanic, this state is pre-eminently so. The very roads in some parts sound hollow under the hoofs of the mules or horses. Leon, the capital, and Granada, are large cities, and once enjoyed great wealth and commercial prosperity; but, like all chief towns in Central America, they have suffered much from crime and consequent internal disorganization, as well as from civil wars, political commotions and misrule. Leon, on the lake of Managua, often called the lake of Leon, is said to have contained at one time 32,000 people. Granada

is beautifully situated on the borders of the lake of Nicaragua. The town of Nicaragua, about 36 miles south-east of Granada, though inferior in size and importance, gives its name to the state and the lake. Like Granada, it is advantageously situated on its banks, not far from the populous island of Ometepe, which is in the lake, and contains an active volcano. Great interest at one time attached to this state and its waters, in connection with the long formed and often talked of project of connecting the two oceans at this point.

In 1850 this project seemed about to be realized. A corps of engineers had been sent to Nicaragua for the execution of the necessary surveys. Great interest was felt in the scheme both in Britain and America, and many travellers were induced to visit Central America on this account. - "Nicaragua appeared to me," says Mr. Froebel, "in the attractive light of a region about to become the theatre of an important movement in civilization, and my interest in the country was excited in a sufficient degree to induce me to visit it."

Mr. Froebel made Granada his head-quarters during his stay in Nicaragua, and returned thither from all his excursions to the country round. He gives an amusing account of home life in Granada:—

"I lived in the house of a German physician, at that time practising at Granada. Our life was rather of a sybaritic kind for a country like Nicaragua. When the dinner was ready, the dishes were carried in procession from the kitchen through the court-yard to the dining-room, which was an open veranda, by the servants, who, on that occa-

sion represented the dignity of the household by a strictly observed hierarchical order. At the head of the procession the cook—a withered beauty, with fresh yellow flowers in her black hair, her naked feet in a pair of dirty white satin shoes embroidered with gold, the *reboso* thrown over her left shoulder, and a cigar in her mouth, carrying a plate on each hand, spread out at the sides of the head in a horizontal line with the ears. In a manner equally studied, though a little less pretending, the others, male and female, followed, and the rear was brought up by a boy carrying an earthen jar filled with drinking water, who, according to his humble station in this domestic hierarchy, was clad in a straw hat, and a shirt reaching from his neck down to his waist. We kept a number of the little parrots called *chocollitos* in our court. At one time we had twenty of them. As soon as we sat down to our meal they would assemble to receive the sweets we threw to them, and would fight clamorously for the largest piece. These chocollitos are very beautiful and amusing little birds, which become tame almost instantaneously, and readily attach themselves to man, as they are in general of an amiable disposition.

“The number of our little chocollitos was diminished by a curious incident. We kept a tame deer in our court-yard, which suddenly became transformed into a carnivorous beast. There is no doubt that this animal had been demoralized by the society of men. At our dinner-table it first learned to eat meat—thoroughly cooked, it is true; but whether its nature was more and more

perverted by this unnatural diet, or that the green colour of the chocollitos contributed to the result, one day our deer seized one of the little birds in his mouth, and before rescue was possible, ate it alive. From that time the deer followed the savage instincts of a beast of prey, feeding on parrots, ducks, and chickens, till at last we found ourselves under the necessity of parting with its dangerous company.

"We had another mischievous animal in our house, called *pisote*. A recent author on Central America has identified the *pisote* with the racoon; but this is a mistake. The *pisote* is the *Nasua fusca*. This animal becomes perfectly tame, but neither precaution nor chastisement will prevent it from doing mischief. Just now it had killed a chicken, and was chained up in consequence. Suddenly, while we were sitting at breakfast, it came from some unexpected quarter, dragging its chain after it, leaping on the table, overturning the sugar-bowl, and scattering the sugar around, dipping its long bushy tail in our cups, and whisking it in our faces. The offender was chastised most unmercifully and closely confined; but a few minutes after, it appeared again quite contented, with a young chicken in its mouth. The criminal was threatened with instantaneous death, but escaped over the roof of the house; and soon after the cook discovered it committing ravages in the pantry.

"I had several opportunities of observing the manners of several kinds of ants living in the houses. All of them are very inoffensive, and even useful creatures. On one occasion I witnessed a remark-

able instance of the concerted and organized action of a crowd of them. They were of a minute species, but, by the wonderful order and expediency in which they worked together, and which it would have been difficult to realize with men, they succeeded in performing a task apparently quite beyond their capability. They carried a dead scorpion of full-grown size up the wall of our room to the ceiling, and thence along the under surface of a beam to a considerable distance, where at last they brought it safely into their nest in the interior of the wood. During the latter part of this achievement, they had to bear the whole weight of the scorpion, together with their own in their inverted position, and in this way to move along the beam. The order was so perfect, that not the slightest deviation from an absolute symmetry and equality of distances and arrangement in the manner of taking hold of the body of the scorpion, and in the movement of the little army of workmen, was observable. No corps of engineers could be drilled to a more absolute perfection in the performance of a mechanical task. According to a rough calculation, there must have been from five to six hundred of these intelligent little creatures at work. Besides those engaged in this transport no others were seen. A single one was sitting on the sting at the end of the scorpion's tail, as if placed there to overlook and direct the whole movement; all the rest, without any exception, were at work. The whole operation may have lasted about an hour.

"At another time I witnessed the transmigration of a whole state or commonwealth of ants, from a

hole in the wall, across our veranda, into another hole in the opposite wall. Two facts struck my attention in this case. The first was, that the marching army of these insects, all moving in one direction, consisted of individuals of such a difference in size and shape, that to consider them as belonging to one species seemed very difficult, and the idea of a commonwealth of different insect nationalities was strongly suggested. The second, that some little beetles, of the family of *Coccinellida*, marched along with the ants from one hole into the other not quite of their own will, for I observed that several times one of them tried to deviate from the line, but was quickly brought back to the ranks by some of the ants placing themselves at its side. The fact of little beetles of the very family just mentioned existing in the nests of ants is well known, but it is of considerable interest to see the fact repeated in distinct climates, with different species of insects of both tribes, and under opposite circumstances."

Mr. Froebel also visited Leon, and gives the following account of it: "When the road opens to within a few leagues of Leon the country opens, and a beautiful plain, well cultivated with maize, expands before the sight. To the left a ridge of wooded hills bordering the sea-coast discovers itself; to the right is a chain of volcanic peaks. 'There is Leon,' cried my servant, a boy of fourteen, with all the pride of a patriotic Nicaraguan. But remembering that he was a native of Granada, his jealousy was roused, and he added, 'Leon is larger, but Granada surpasses it in civilization.'



WARRIOR ANTS.
(Magnified.)

“From the effects of long and desperate struggles, of which Leon has been the theatre during the civil wars of the country, the greater number of the houses were in ruins ; and I have no reason to suppose that these have since diminished. Nevertheless, Leon is still one of the largest cities of Central America. At the time of my visit it was stated to have 30,000 inhabitants. This may be a gross exaggeration ; but it is very difficult to form an opinion of the matter, as even from the roof of the cathedral the suburbs cannot be seen in their whole extent. The scattered houses of the outer parts hide themselves in a forest of trees, and between thickets of shrubbery. The cathedral—a large and well-constructed stone building with a massive cupola and roof—is one of the most distinguished works of architecture in Spanish America. The view from the roof is magnificent, and ranges over the most beautiful scenes of this kind I have ever seen. Round a large area the red roofs of the houses are seen here and there, peeping out between trees of the most luxuriant growth ; while the plain beyond is occupied by an immense forest, occasionally broken by fields of maize, more extensively and carefully cultivated than I have seen elsewhere in Nicaragua. In a westerly and north-westerly direction the plain slopes gradually down to the coast of the Pacific, without any intervening hills. This is not the case towards the south, where the north-western termination of a range of hills running close to the sea-coast is seen. Towards the north and the east a whole line of volcanic cones, from the Viego to the Momotombo, rise in strange regularity of form, so as to appear more like gigantic works of art than natural mountains.

"The population of the suburbs of Leon is mostly Indian; that of *Subtiaba*, which is considered a suburb, but is more a town by itself, is entirely so, and has even preserved its Indian language."

Mr. Froebel met with many singular adventures in his various excursions in the country, of which the following extracts may give some idea:—

"I passed the night at the Hacienda de la Sebadilla, situated near the road, at about equal distances from the lake and the ocean. In the evening I met an Englishman of my acquaintance, who superintended a body of Indians at work on the road, and invited me to pass the night with him at the hacienda where he had his quarters, promising to accompany me to Rivas the next morning.

"We started very early and followed the cut through the bush. On the trees near the road I saw numerous large wasps' nests, of an irregular oval form. My guide told me that it was not good to speak loud in the vicinity of these nests, as the wasps become easily irritated by a noise, and would attack me. I gave little credit to his statement. But soon after, when I had remained behind a few hundred paces, and the extraordinary dimensions of one of these nests, which could not have been less than four or five feet in diameter, induced me to call my companion to look at it, the insects suddenly rushed forth and surrounded me. I put spurs to my horse and fled with all the speed of which it was capable. My companion, whom I passed, followed in the same manner, while the infuriated insects were all the time upon us, many of them getting into our hair and darting their stings wherever they could find



A WASP'S NEST HANGING FROM A TREE.

access to our skin. I trembled for the consequences, as the stings were burning like fire; but the pain was of short duration, the swelling very slight, and soon passed away, and the consequences were less

severe than I have known to follow from as many mosquitos. On another occasion the report of a gun produced the same effect, in exciting the wrath of a swarm of wasps. I shot a bird, when a companion of mine who stood near raised such a cry that in the first moment I thought I had shot him. His terror, however, was caused by the sudden attack of a swarm of wasps rushing from their nest immediately after the shot had been fired."

On another occasion, when travelling in the province of Chontales, Mr. Froebel says: "Acoyapa is the chief town of Chontales, and, together with the farms of the surrounding country, has a population of about 2600 inhabitants. We were received in the house of the first *alcalde*, whom we found to be a very intelligent and obliging person. On one of the nights we passed in his house, illumined by the light of the moon, a companion of mine called me to see a large snake, passing between the wooden bars of the window into our room. The reader must be aware that in the whole state of Nicaragua, and I suppose throughout Central America in general, glass windows are unknown. A rat was then seen running up the wall, to hide itself under the thatch of the house; which, as there was no ceiling between, we had immediately over us. The snake followed it with a spring, and soon the screaming of the rat told us that it was caught by its enemy. This snake was of a species called *ratonera*, or rat-snake; and being totally harmless, and even useful, is tolerated in the houses. As to poisonous reptiles, I have never seen any in Nicaragua, with the exception of a beautiful specimen of the coral-snake, which had been killed,



ENCOUNTER WITH A RATTLESNAKE.

and was brought to me at Granada. I could not learn one single case of a person having died from the bite of a serpent in the interior of the country. This was not the case at San Juan del Norte, where the son of one of the principal merchants had been killed in that manner; and other similar instances were recorded. But still this cannot be compared with the danger from venomous reptiles in Texas,

near Mexico, and other southern and western parts of the Union. In some tracts along the Rio Grande a rattlesnake may be seen every few hundred paces; and at San Antonio, in Texas, no summer passes without some persons of the lower classes, mostly Mexicans, dying from the bite of the mocassin. In Nicaragua a species of rattlesnake, *cascabela*—is found; but it cannot be very abundant, as I never encountered it in my travels. Two kinds of snakes are said to be particularly dangerous in the coast region near San Juan del Norte, and in the woods of the San Juan river,—one of them called the *culebra tobova*, the other the *vibora de sangre*; and to these the fatal cases which I had heard mentioned at San Juan were ascribed."

Monkeys are abundant in the woods. Mr. Froebel says that the roaring of the howling monkeys sounded in the forest almost like that of lions. On one of his excursions from Acoyapa, he disturbed a monkey family as he passed by their dwelling in the woods :—

"Continuing my journey over the table-land, I was struck by observing the number of springs in this region. Within a circuit of not many miles in diameter a river is formed, on which the canoes of the Indians can pass down to Bluefields. Most of these springs are surrounded by trees and thickets of bamboo, and of the little supa palm. At one of these localities, while passing under a tree, I disturbed the peace of a family of monkeys. With loud and angry chatterings they fled, and soon were hidden among the branches. But in this hasty flight a young one had been left be-

hind, on a branch just above the path, and so near that I could reach it with the muzzle of my gun. I stopped my horse to look at the little creature, which seemed to be so much frightened that it did not dare to move when its mother came back to save it. It was interesting to watch the struggle between fear and maternal love in the old monkey, —alternately approaching, now retiring; hiding herself in the thicket, and then appearing again. Several times she stretched her arm towards her offspring, but as her eyes met mine, she again lost courage. At last the better feeling prevailed: with a sudden, desperate jump, she reached the little thing, clasped it in her arm, and in an instant was out of sight."

When travelling between Rivas and San Juan del Sur, Mr. Froebel passed through a very wild tract of country, and saw for the first time what is called a *jierral*, or tract of land overgrown by *jiara* trees. It is quite a characteristic feature in the country, and must be described in a few words. The tree is the *Craccaia Cyete*, or calabash-tree, well known by the use which is made of the hard shell of its fruit in manufacturing vessels for domestic purposes. The drinking cups, constructed from a smaller species, of an oval form, are called *cucos*, while the bowls, or basins, prepared from a larger variety, of a compressed subglobular shape, ~~measures~~ as much as one foot in diameter, are ~~said to be~~ *made*. For the purpose of manufacturing ~~these vessels~~ the tree is cultivated. Here, however, I am speaking of the wild tree, which bears fruit of the size of a large orange. The tree is small,

with a great number of long, thin, worm-shaped branches, covered all along with small and very poor leaves of their own, but bearing an additional vegetation of parasitic *bromeliaceæ*, in tufts of stiff leaves striped red and green, in parrot-like colours, so that a superficial observer may believe these tufts to be the flowers of the tree. To form an idea of a *jicaral*, a number of these trees must be imagined scattered over a horizontal portion of the country, the soil of which consists of a black, stiff clay, and which is so situated as to become overflowed in the rainy season, when the entire district is transformed into a marsh. During the dry season the soil becomes nearly as hard as stone, and cracked in all directions, so that it is sometimes exceedingly rough, and with its dark colour appears almost like a field of lava. Between the trees some tufts of a coarse kind of grass, and bushes of the aroma mimosa, with the sweet-scented yellow catkins, are scattered. The ground under the trees is strewn with the fruits, which are eagerly sought and eaten by the cattle, the succulent pulp allaying at the same time their hunger and thirst. But the skeletons of cows, horses, and mules lying about, form an essential feature of a more extended *jicaral*, as a considerable number of these animals die in these localities from want of food and water during the dry season. On a large scale, a region of *jicarales* extends all along the foot of the table-land of Chontales, Matagalpa, and New Segovia.

“The whole western coast of the continent, from Nicaragua to the peninsula of California, is frequently visited by thunder-storms of a frightful

violence. Mazatlan, for instance, is ill-reputed for this feature of its climate; while at San Francisco, on the contrary, thunder-storms are of rare occurrence, and not very heavy. In our case, we had reason to congratulate ourselves on having reached a shelter before it broke out. The flashes of lightning were most frightful, and the claps of thunder altogether appalling. The rain poured down so heavily that it seemed doubtful whether a man could breathe in such an atmosphere. The house we had entered was inhabited by a widow and her two daughters. As soon as we had alighted, the curate of the village, curious to see the foreign travellers, hastened to pay a visit to the ladies; and now, while heavy strokes of lightning fell in every direction on the trees of the forest, the trembling women looked to the priest for consolation; and the young divine availed himself of the opportunity of showing his superior information. 'When I was a boy,' he said, 'I was afraid of thunder and lightning. But since that time I have studied philosophy—a terrible clap!—*Ave Maria santissima!*—and our professor has taught us that the heavenly bodies are so high up to fall down upon us.' Another clap. The next stroke drove the trembling party into a dark room, where the women had taken refuge: and as long as the storm lasted we heard their loud '*¡Ay, ay, ay!*' but scarcely had it passed away, and the thunder was heard from a certain distance, when the philosophical curate, followed by the widow and her daughters, issued forth from their place of concealment, and calling a little boy who passed by: 'Juan!' he said, in a tone of

mental superiority, 'go quickly to my mother, and tell her she need not be frightened,—there is no danger at all!'

Mr. Froebel went by water from San Juan to Granada. At that time steamboats were not yet plying on the lake, and he had to content himself with the accommodations of one of the large canoes of the natives, called "bongos." The passage up the river occupied nine days, making an average progress of about twelve miles a-day. Three days more were spent in crossing the lake. The whole passage was afterwards performed by the steamers in two days. Mr. Froebel says, that "in reference to the beauties of nature, the trip is one of the most interesting that can be made." The banks of the river were thickly wooded, and in some places looked like a solid wall of leaves and flowers, so closely were the branches of the trees interwoven with climbing plants. "One night," he says, "our boat had anchored in the midst of the stream. Strange forms of trees, spectre-like in the dark, stood before us, and seemed to move as the eye strove in vain to make out their real shape. From time to time a splash in the water, caused by the movement of an alligator, the bellowing of a manati, the screeching of a night bird, or the roar of some beast of the forest, broke the silence, and mingled at last with my feverish dream. In the morning, a song addressed by our boatmen to the Virgin roused me from my sleep. . . . Our anchor was raised, and, with a wild shout of the crew, twelve oars simultaneously struck the water. The sun was glittering in the river. The tops of the trees were steeped in


light: monkeys were swinging in the branches; splendid macaws flew in pairs from bank to bank. All around exhibited the glory and brightness of superabundant nature."

A still more minute and interesting account of the same voyage, from San Juan to Granada, is given by Mr. Roberts, in his "*Voyages and Excursions in Central America*." He was for many years engaged in trade on the coasts, and also in the interior of that country, while it was still under Spanish rule. On one occasion, when visiting the coast to purchase tortoise shell, he landed at San Juan, when he was arrested on suspicion of being a spy. A Spanish sailor (for what reason it does not appear) bore false witness against him, and accused him of having robbed and nearly murdered him.

"It was in vain," says Mr. Roberts, "I protested my innocence: I was immediately ironed, and sent under a guard to the fort. My Indians were exceedingly surprised at seeing me brought ashore in this manner, and, before I could fully explain the cause to Brown, I was hurried to the guard-house.

"Next morning, about nine o'clock, I was conducted before the commandant and a number of officers assembled; and, as they appeared to be fully satisfied that I was, or had been, an officer of the Centinela, a paper was presented for signature, which was said to contain the charges made out against me, and the depositions of the two Spaniards now made upon oath.

"I resolutely refused, however, to sign this paper, on the ground of my imperfect knowledge of the Spanish language, and having no interpreter on



whom I could depend ; that I was perfectly innocent, and might, by signing it, criminate myself. They remanded me back to prison ; and the commandant of the fort, Don Francisco Sallablanca, sent me some refreshment. In the evening I overheard one of my guards assuring his comrade that the officers were perfectly satisfied of my being a spy ; and had, therefore, come to the resolution of executing me without delay ! Early in the morning I was again brought before these judges, and desired to sign the paper, but still refused. After a short deliberation, a sergeant and six men conducted me to the back of the fort ; two others were employed to support me, as I could not walk without assistance, both legs being in irons ; another person carried an empty cask ; and a fourth, a chair for the commandant. Arrived at the back of the fort, the cask was put down, and I was ordered to sit upon it. The commandant placed his chair close beside me, and informed me, by means of an interpreter, that I had been regularly tried, and that it was the opinion of all present, that sufficient evidence had been adduced to prove that I was an officer belonging to the Patriot service, and that, having entered the harbour as a spy, they were justified in putting me to death in a summary manner ; he therefore exhorted me to address myself to Almighty God, as in the course of another half hour I should cease to live. He then ordered the soldiers to load their pieces and draw up in line about twelve yards distant. When the sergeant came forward to blindfold me with a handkerchief, I refused to submit to it ; and on turning my head from side to side to prevent it, and as a

sign of my innocence, my eye fell upon my poor Indians, who had been brought out to witness the execution. The agitation of my mind at this crisis cannot be expressed. These men being much attached to me, raised that loud and melancholy howl, or lamentation, which I had often heard them chant at the death of one of their own tribe. Despair fell so heavily on my mind that all hope utterly left me; but on acquiring new courage, I instantly turned to the commandant, who, by this time, had risen from his chair, and observed, in broken Spanish and English, that, if he was determined to murder an innocent man, a subject of Great Britain, I could die without being blindfolded. Every tongue was now hushed, save those of my poor Indians, expecting the fatal word or signal which was to expedite me from a world of strife. I was in the act of recommending my soul to God, when suddenly I heard the splashing of oars, and a large boat, hitherto concealed by the bushes and bamboos, appeared close to us.

“A feeling now darted into my mind that I should escape the pending catastrophe; and, in consequence, I now and afterwards acted with more boldness than was perhaps warranted by my critical situation. The commandant suspended the execution, and I was conducted to the guard-house.

“The boat proved to be a government express, down the river from the Castle of San Carlos, with a re-inforcement of men, under the command of an officer who was to supersede the present commander. I was shortly ordered before the new commandant, to whom I explained my reasons for having called

at the harbour, the time I had been living on the coast, and the nature of my trade with the Indians. I referred him to papers, found in my vessel, corroborative of my statement; but, unfortunately, he could find no one to read them."

He was accordingly sent in a "bongo" to San Carlos, that his papers might be examined by the commandant there. Among these papers were some religious tracts and ten or twelve New Testaments, which Mr. Roberts had received from the English missionary at Belize for distribution among the British settlers on the coast. The ignorant Spanish commandant considered these books as suspicious, and likely to be "of a political nature;" and as none of his people could explain them, Mr. Roberts was sent on to Granada. Here he was twice examined before the governor, who appears to have been equally unable to decide the difficult question. He and his councillors were afraid the books were "revolutionary," and Mr. Roberts was ordered to be sent to Leon, that Don Miguel Seravia, the governor of the district, might decide on his case. The sympathy of the people for an Englishman suspected of being a spy and agent of the Patriots was shown by their throwing a great number of gifts to Mr. Roberts, through the grating of his prison, during the night he passed at Granada. In the morning the floor was covered with cakes, gingerbread, cheese, chocolate, cigars, and pieces of money. The contributions in money amounted to twenty-seven dollars.

Mr. Roberts was sent on to Leon, where he was brought before Don Miguel Seravia, who fortunately

could speak English, and who, after an examination, fully acquitted him of all the charges against him.

Since the Central American provinces have thrown off the Spanish yoke, Nicaragua, as well as the others, has suffered much from civil war and discord. The state was divided into two great parties—Royalists and Liberals; here distinguished, as in the other states, by local names, according to the various leaders whom they followed, or from other circumstances; as, for example, the democrats were sometimes called Calandracas, from calandra, the lark,—meaning to express that the party was that of the poor, who live like the birds of the air.

At the time of Mr. Froebel's visit to Nicaragua, the two chief leaders of the opposing parties were General Muñoz and Fruto Chamorro. With both of these Mr. Froebel had a personal interview, and he thus gives his impression of their respective characters and appearance:—

“I hastened to call on General Muñoz, at that time the chief personage in Nicaragua, to whom I brought a letter of introduction. He received me in complete undress, throwing, however, in the moment of my entering the room, a little cape or diminutive cloak—outside yellow and inside blue—over his shoulders; in which he reminded me strongly of Leporello in the opera. The effect of the letter surpassed my expectations. The general assured me of his sincerest friendship; and, as far as my interest with him has gone, I have had no reason to doubt his sincerity.”

Muñoz died in battle. The Leonese govern-

ment was attacked by a force from Honduras. Muñoz marched against and completely routed these invaders; but he found his death in the engagement.

"Though he had many defects in his character, the General José Trinidad Muñoz was the most enlightened man of his time in Nicaragua. He knew that his country, and Central America in general, could only be redeemed by the aid of foreign elements of population from Europe and North America. He had all the ambition which might be expected in a Spanish American general, and, according to his system, a military government was the most adapted to the condition of society in Nicaragua. But if he had been in possession of absolute power, he would have used it to advance the interests of the country. To dispose of the public lands in favour of immigration, to promote the naturalization of foreigners, to introduce complete religious toleration, to establish a system of public education, to secularize the so-called 'capellanias,' and in any way to concur in the re-establishment of the Central American federation, were amongst the political measures he had in view."

Mr. Froebel had also an interview with Chamorro, the opponent of Muñoz. He says: "To protect Granada against a sudden attack of the Leonese, the Granadinos under Chamorro had taken possession of Managua. The 'army' consisted of two hundred men at the utmost; but the road was covered with soldiers and recruits hastening to join him. We breakfasted at Managua, and were ready to proceed,

when a man in a dressing-gown and night-cap appeared, followed by an officer in uniform, and subjected us to an interrogatory in reference to our journey. We were allowed to pass. 'Who was the man in undress?' I asked the waiter. '*El general del ejército,*' answered the boy with importance. It was Don Fruto Chamorro himself, who had become general of the Granadinos, and soon afterwards became president of Nicaragua."

~ Fruto Chamorro died in 1854, exhausted by the hardships and cares of a continued civil war, in which he was the leader of one of the two parties representing at the same time the legal executive authority of the republic. In the tragedy of the decay of Hispano-American life in Central America, he has acted a part to which sympathy cannot be refused. I believe that he was a true friend of his country, and with the honesty and firmness of his character, he could have effected much good if his notions had been less circumscribed. But by the course of events, his natural stubbornness and the narrowness of his views incessantly increased, and his political ideas became more and more reactionary. Under his leadership, the disinclination towards foreigners which he had shown privately before, and which caused the Legislature of the state to reject a proposition of law facilitating the settlement of foreigners in the country, became avowedly an essential part of the political creed of the Conservative party of Nicaragua. One extreme called the other into life. The democratic party, seeing and understanding the degree of prosperity, progress, wealth, and power derived by the United States

from foreign emigration, and fully perceiving that, with all its natural wealth and advantages of situation, Central America has no other hope of escape from ruin than by the acquisition of assistance in skill, intelligence, activity, enterprise, and capital, from the same source, demanded foreign assistance at any cost; and thus, while the revolution had again broken out at Leon in 1854, the party under the leadership of Francisco Castellon, took the desperate resolution of calling in the military assistance of a band of North American adventurers, under William Walker." They soon found that these allies did them much more harm than good. The sequel has been related in a preceding chapter.





CHAPTER IX.

COSTA RICA.

Description of Costa Rica—San José—Climate—An Englishman in difficulties—A singular story—An energetic woman—Coffee—Bivouacs of the bullock-drivers—Dulce and aguardiente—Don Juan and his retinue—A lady lost in the Serapiquí—An uncomfortable journey—Ascent of the volcano Cartago—View of the two oceans.

COSTA RICA is the most southern state of Central America, extending from the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific, between Nicaragua on the north and New Granada on the south. Its area is 16,250 square miles. Its surface is mountainous with numerous volcanoes. The nucleus of the elevation in Costa Rica is the great volcano of Cartago, which towers in its midst. Here the Cordilleras assume their general character of a great unbroken mountain barrier, but soon subside again in low ridges on the Isthmus of Panama.

Costa Rica has no good port on the east, but has several on the west, of which Golfo Dulce, Puntarenas, and Caldera, are the principal. The capital of Costa Rica is San José, which is in the interior of the country. It is thus described by Mr. Trollope, who visited it in 1859 :—

“The houses are comfortable enough. They are

built with very ordinary doors and windows, of one or two storeys, according to the wealth of the owners, and are decently clean outside, though apparently rather dirty within. The streets are broad and straight, being all at right angles to each other, and though not very well paved, are not rough enough to elicit admiration. There is a square, the plaza, in which stand the cathedral, the barracks, and a few of the best houses in the town. There is a large and tolerably well arranged market place, a really handsome set of public buildings, and two moderately good hotels.

“The valley of San José, as it is called, is 4500 feet above the sea; and consequently, though within the tropics, and only ten degrees north of the line, the climate is good, and the heat, I believe, never excessive. I was there in April, and at that time, except for a few hours in the middle of the day, and that only on some days, there was nothing like tropical heat. Within ten days of my leaving San José, I heard natives at Panama complaining of the heat as being altogether unendurable. But up there, on that high plateau, the sun had no strength that was inconvenient even to an Englishman.

“Indeed, no climate can, I imagine, be more favourable to fertility, and to man’s comfort at the same time, than that of the interior of Costa Rica. The sugar cane comes to maturity much quicker than in Demerara, or Cuba. There it should be cut in about thirteen or fourteen months from the time it is planted; in Nicaragua and Costa Rica it comes to perfection in nine or ten. The ground, without manure, will afford two crops of corn in a

year. Coffee grows in great perfection, and gives a very heavy crop. The soil is all volcanic, or, I should perhaps more properly say, has been the produce of volcanoes, and is indescribably fertile. And all this has been given without that intensity of heat which in those southern regions generally accompanies tropical fertility, and which makes hard work fatal to a white man; while it creates lethargy and idleness, and neutralizes gifts which would otherwise be regarded as the fairest which God has bestowed on his creatures. In speaking thus, I refer to the central parts of Costa Rica only,—to those which lie some thousand feet above the level of the sea. Along the sea shores, both of the Atlantic and Pacific, the heat is as great and the climate as unwholesome as in New Granada or the West Indies. It would be difficult to find a place worse circumstanced in this respect than Punta-arenas.

“But though the valley or plateau of San José and the interior of the country generally is thus favourably situated, I cannot say that the nation is prosperous. It seems to be God's will that highly fertile countries should not really prosper. Man's energy is brought to its highest point by the presence of obstacles to be overcome, by the existence of difficulties which are all but insuperable. And, therefore, a Scotch farm will give a greater value in produce than an equal amount of land in Costa Rica. When nature does so much, man will do next to nothing.

“Those who seem to do best in this country, both in trade and agriculture, are Germans. Most of those who are carrying on business on a large scale

are foreigners,—that is, not Spanish by descent. There are English here, and Americans, and French, but I think the Germans are the most wedded to the country. The finest coffee properties are in the hands of foreigners, as also are the plantations of canes, and saw-mills for the preparation of timber. But they have a very up-hill task. Labour is extremely scarce and very dear. The people are not idle, as the negroes are, and they love to earn and put by their money; but they are very few in number; they have land of their own, and are materially well off. In the neighbourhood of San José a man's labour is worth a dollar a-day, and even at that price it is not always to be had."

Mr. Trollope met several English settlers, who were not, apparently, getting on very well. The first he met was on the way between Punta-arenas and San José:—

"The first thing that met my view, on stepping out of the truck, was a solitary Englishman seated on a half sawn log of wood. Those who remember Hood's 'Whims and Oddities,' may bear in mind a heart-rending picture of the last man. Only that the times do not agree, I should have said that this poor fellow must have sat for the picture. He was undeniably an English labourer. No man of any other nation would have had that face, or worn those clothes, or kicked his feet about in that same awkward, melancholy manner.

"He was, he said, in charge of the saw-mill, having been induced to come out into that country for three years. According to him, it was a wretched and miserable place. 'No man,' he said, 'ever found

himself in worse diggings. He earned a dollar and a half a-day, and with that he could hardly buy shoes and have his clothes washed. Why did he not go home? I asked. Oh, he had come for three years, and he'd stay his three years out, if so be he didn't die. The saw-mill was not paying, he said, and never would pay. So that, on the whole, his account of Costa Rica was not encouraging.

In Cartago Mr. Collopy found an English lady settled. He says, "Mrs. X—— was, and I suppose is, the only Englishwoman living in Cartago, and, with that sudden intimacy which springs up with more than tropical reterity in such places, she told me the singular history of her married life.

"The reader would not care that I should repeat it at length.—Her husband had been engaged in mining operations, and she had come out to Guatemala with him in search of gold. From thence, after a period of partial success, he was enticed away into Costa Rica. Some speculation there, in which he or his partners were concerned, promised better than that other one in Guatemala; and he went, leaving his young wife and children behind him. Of course he was to return very soon, and, of course, he did not return at all. Mrs. X—— was left with her children, searching for gold herself. 'Every evening,' she said, 'I saw the earth washed myself, and took up with me to the house the gold that was found.' What an occupation for a young English woman, the mother of three children! At this time she spoke no Spanish, and had no one with her who spoke English.

“And then tidings came from her husband that he could not come to her; and she made up her mind to go to him. She had no money, the gold-washing having failed; her children were without shoes to their feet; she had no female companion; she had no attendant but one native man; and yet, starting from the middle of Guatemala, she made her way to the coast, and thence by ship to Costa Rica.

“After that, her husband became engaged in what, in those countries, is called ‘transit.’ Now, ‘transit’ means the privilege of making money by transporting Americans of the United States over the isthmus to and from California; and in most hands has led to fraud, filibustering, ruin, and destruction. Mr. X——, like many others, was taken in, and, according to his widow’s account, the matter ended in a deputation being sent, from New York I think, to murder him. He was struck with a life-preserver in the streets of San José, never fully recovered from the blow, and then died.

“He had become possessed of a small estate in the neighbourhood of Cartago, on the proceeds of which the widow was now living. ‘And will you not return home?’ I said. ‘Yes; when I have got my rights. Look here;’ and she brought down a ledger, showing me that she had all manner of claims to all manner of shares in all manner of mines. She slapped her hands loudly together, for she was a woman of much energy, and declared that she would have her rights. When she had gotten her rights she would go home. Alas! alas! poor lady!”

The roads in Costa Rica are so bad as to be impassable except by the bullock-carts of the country. Of these roads Mr. Trollope thus writes :—

“What struck me most was the constant traffic on the road or track over which we passed. I believe I may call it a road, for the produce of the country is brought down over it in bullock-carts; and I think that in South Wales I have taken a gig over one very much of the same description. But it is extremely rude, and only fit for solid wooden wheels,—circles, in fact, of timber,—such as are used, and for the patient, slow step of the bullocks.

“But during the morning and evening hours the strings of these bullock-carts were incessant. They travel from four till ten, then rest till three or four, and again proceed for four or five hours in the cool of the evening. They are all laden with coffee, and the idea they give is, that the growth of that article in Costa Rica must be much more than sufficient to supply the whole world. For miles and miles we met them, almost without any interval. Coffee, coffee, coffee; coffee, coffee, coffee! It is grown in large quantities, I believe, only in the high lands of San José; and all that is exported is sent down to Punta-arenas, though by travelling this route it must either pass across the Isthmus railway at a vast cost, or else be carried round the Horn. At present half goes one way and half the other, but not a grain is carried, as it should all be carried, direct to the Atlantic.

“Coffee is the chief produce of Costa Rica. Those who love statistics may perhaps care to know that the average yearly export is something under

a hundred thousand quintals; now a quintal weighs a hundred pounds, or rather, I believe, ninety-nine pounds exact.

“The bivouacs made on the roadside by the bul-



COFFEE-PLANT.

lock-drivers, for their night and noon accommodation, are very picturesque when seen filled by the animals. A piece of flat ground is selected by the roadside, about half an acre in size, and close to a river or some running water. Into this one or two hundred bullocks are taken, and then released from their carts. But they are kept yoked together, to



OVER THE COFFEE

reverses their starting. Here they are not exclusively at sugar-canes, which the men carry with them, and not along the trail. The drovers patiently cut the calves up with their knives, and the calves patiently munch them. Neither the men nor the animals quarrel, as they would with us, or squabble for the use of the water-course, or grumble at their own ill luck or the good luck of their neighbours. Drivers and driven are alike orderly, patient, and slow, spending their lives in taking coffee down

to Punta-arenas, and in cutting and munching thousands of sugar-canes.

"We passed some of these establishments by moonlight, and they looked like large, crowded fairs, full of low, small booths. The men, however, do not put up tents, but sleep out in their carts.

"They told me that the soil in Costa Rica was very favourable to the sugar-cane, and I looked out to see some sugar among the coffee. But not a



THE SUGAR-CANE.

hogshhead came that way. We saw patches of the cane growing by the roadside; but no more was produced than what sufficed for the use of the proprietor himself, and for such sale as the traffic on the road afforded. Indeed, I found that they do not make sugar, so called, in Costa Rica, but import what they use. The article fabricated is called by them

‘dulce.’ It comes from their hands in ugly round brown lumps, of the consistency of brick,—looking, in truth, much more like a large brickbat than any possible saccharine arrangement.

“On my way into San José I got off my mule to look at an old peasant making dulce, or, in other words, grinding his sugar-canes, by the roadside. It was done in the most primitive manner. One bullock turned the mill, which consisted of three vertical wooden rollers. The juice trickled into a little cistern, and as soon as the old man found that he had enough, he bailed it out and boiled it down. And yet I imagine that as good sugar may be made in Costa Rica as in British Guiana. The canes are fairly good, and the juice as sweet as that produced in first-rate sugar-growing soils.

“It seemed that the only use made of this ‘dulce,’ excepting that of sweetening the coffee of the peasants, is for distillation. A spirit is distilled from it at San José, called by the generic name of *aguardiente*; and this, doubtless, would give considerable impulse to the growth of sugar-canes, but for a little law made on the subject by the present president of the republic. The president himself is a cane grower, and by this law it is enacted that the only person in Costa Rica entitled to supply the distillery with dulce shall be Don Juan Mora. Now, Don Juan Mora is the president.”

Mr. Trollope met Don Juan Mora at Esparza, on the way between Punta-arenas and San José. He says:—

“Before we left Punta-arenas we learned that Don Juan Rafael Mora, the president of the re-

public, was coming down the same road with a large retinue of followers, to inaugurate the commencement of the works of the canal. He would be on his way to meet his brother-president of the next republic, Nicaragua, at San Juan del Sur; and at a spot some little distance from thence this great work was to be begun at once. He and his party were to sleep at Esparza. Therefore we decided on going on further before we halted; and in truth at that place we did meet Don Juan and his retinue. They had arrived some hours before us, and had nearly filled the little hotel. On entering the public sitting-room a melodiously rich Irish brogue at once greeted my ears, and I saw seated at the table, joyous in a semi-military uniform, The O'Gorman Mahon, great as in bygone unemancipated days, when, with head erect and stentorian voice, he would make himself audible to half the county Clare. The head was still as erect, and the brogue as unexceptionable.

"He speedily introduced us to a brother workman in the same mission, the Prince Polignac. With the President himself I had not the honour of making acquaintance, for he speaks only Spanish, and my tether in this language is unfortunately very short. He seemed to be a courteous little gentleman, though rather flustered by the magnitude of the work on which he was engaged. There was something singular in the amalgamation of the three men, who had thus got themselves together in this place to do honour to the coming canal—the President of the Republic, Prince Polignac, and The O'Gorman Mahon. I could not but think of the heterogeneous heroes of the 'Groves of Blarney'—

* There were Ximenes and Polyphemos,
(Ober Cromwell and Leslie Foster.)

‘And now, boys, ate a bit of what’s going, and take a dhrup of dhrink,’ said The O’Gorman, patting us on the shoulders with kind patronage. We did as we were bid, ate and drank, paid the bill, and went our way rejoicing. That night, or next morning rather, at about 2 A.M., we reached a wayside inn called San Mateo, and there rested for five or six hours. That we should obtain any such accommodation along the road astonished me, and of such as we got we were very glad. But it must not be supposed that it was of a very excellent quality. We found three bedsteads in the front room, into which the door of the house opened. On these were no mattresses, not even a palliasse. They consisted of flat boards sloping away a little towards the feet, with some hard substance prepared for a pillow. In the morning we got a cup of coffee without milk. For these luxuries and for pasturage for the mules we paid about ten shillings a-head.”

At San José Mr. Trollope met an Englishman and his wife, who were returning to England, and had decided on going by the San Juan. It seems that the lady had reached San José, as all people do reach it, by Panama and Punta-arenas, and had suffered on the route. At anyrate, she had taken a dislike to it, and had resolved on returning by the San Juan and the Serapiqui rivers,—a route which is called the Serapiqui Road.

“To do this, it is necessary for the traveller to ride on mules for four, five, or six days, according to his or her capability. The Serapiqui river is then reached,

and from that point the further journey is made in canoes down the Serapiqui river till it falls into the San Juan, and then down that river to Greytown.

"This gentleman with his wife reached the Serapiqui in safety; though it seems that she suffered greatly on the road. But when once there, as she herself said, all her troubles were over. That weary work of supporting herself on her mule through mud, and thorns, and thick bushes, of scrambling over precipices and through rivers, was done. She had been very despondent, even from before the time of her starting; but now, she said, she believed that she should live to see her mother again. She was seated in the narrow canoe, among cloaks and cushions, with her husband close to her, and the boat was pushed into the stream. Almost in a moment, within two minutes of starting, not a hundred yards from the place where she had last trod, the canoe struck against a snag or upturned fragment of a tree, and was upset. The lady was borne by the stream among the entangled branches of timber which clogged the river, and when her body was found life had been long extinct.

"This had happened on the very day that I reached San José, and the news arrived two or three days afterwards. The wretched husband, too, made his way back to the town, finding himself unable to go on upon his journey alone, with such a burden on his back. What could he have said to his young wife's mother when she came to meet him at Southampton, expecting to throw her arms round her daughter?"


Mr. Trollope and his friend resolved to travel by

the same route as this unfortunate lady, and they seem to have met with many hardships by the way. He says:—

— We found that the path very soon narrowed, so much so that it was with difficulty we could keep our hats on our heads; and then the surface of the path became softer and softer, till our beasts were up to their knees in mud. All motion quicker than that of a walk became impossible; and even at this pace the struggles in the mud were both frequent and uncomfortable.

— It was after this that I really learned how all-powerful is the force of mud. We came at last to a track that was divided crossways by ridges, somewhat like the ridges of ploughed ground. Each ridge was perhaps a foot and a half broad, and the mules invariably stepped between them, not on them. Stepping on them, they could not have held their feet; stepping between them, they came at each step with their belly to the ground, so that the riders' feet and legs were trailing in the mud. The struggles of the poor brutes were dreadful. It seemed to me frequently impossible that my beast should extricate himself, laden as he was. But still he went on patiently, slowly, and continuously; splash, splash! slosh, slosh! Every muscle of his body was working; and every muscle of my body was working also, for it is not very easy to sit upon a mule under such circumstances.

The bushes were so close upon me that one hand was required to guard my face from the thorns. My knees were constantly in contact with the stumps of trees; and when my knees



were free from such difficulties, my shins were sure to be in the wars. Then the poor animal rolled so from side to side, in his incredible struggles with the mud, that it was frequently necessary to hold myself on by the pommel of the saddle. Added to this, it was essentially necessary to keep some sort of guide upon the creature's steps, or one's legs would have been absolutely broken. For the mule cares for himself only, and not for his rider. It is nothing to him if a man's knee be put out of joint against the stump of a tree. Splash, splash! slosh, slosh! we were at it all day. We went on for hours almost without speaking. My shins by this time were black and blue, and I held myself on to my mule chiefly by my spurs. Our way was still through dense forests, and was always either up or down hill. The scenery was beautiful, but we were too much engaged in mud to enjoy it thoroughly. Five or six pounds of mud clinging round one's boots and inside one's trousers do not add to one's enjoyment of scenery.

"Mud, mud, mud, mud! Even inside the houses and ranchoes everything seemed to turn into mud. The floor beneath one's feet became mud with the splashing of the water. The boards were begrimed with mud. We were offered coffee that was mud to the taste and touch. I felt that the blood in my veins was becoming muddy."


Mr. Trollope went with his companion to visit the grave of the unfortunate lady before mentioned. "It was a spot in the middle of a grass enclosure, fenced off rudely so as to guard it from beasts of prey. The funeral had taken place after

dusk. It had been attended by some twelve or fourteen Costa Rican soldiers, who are kept in a fort a little below, on the banks of the Serapiqui. Each of these men had held a torch. The husband was there, and another Englishman who was travelling with him; as was also, I believe, the proprietor of the place. So attended, the body of the Englishwoman was committed to its strange grave, in a strange country."

Mr. Trollope then embarked on the river in which this unfortunate lady had lost her life. He says of it:—

"The Serapiqui is a fine river; very rapid, but not so much so as to make it dangerous, if care be taken to avoid the snags. There is not a house or hut on either side of it; but the forest comes down to the very brink. Up in the huge trees the monkeys hung jabbering, shaking their ugly heads at the boat as it went down, or screaming in anger at this invasion of their territories. The macaws flew high over head, making their own music; and then there was the constant little splash of the paddle in the water. The boatmen spoke no word, but worked on always, pausing now and again for a moment to drink out of the hollow of their hands. And the sun became hotter and hotter as we neared the sea, and the mosquitoes began to bite. . . . 'Tis thus that one goes down the waters of the Serapiqui."

The summit of the volcano of Cartago, in Costa Rica, is the only spot whence a view may be obtained of both the great oceans of the world. Mr. Stephens gives the following account of his ascent of this mountain:—



"Immediately after dinner we set out to ascend the volcano. It was necessary to sleep *en route*, and Mr. Lovel furnished me with a poncha from Mexico for a covering, and a bear's skin from the Rocky Mountains for a bed.

"Passing down the principal street, we crossed in front of the cathedral, and immediately began to ascend. Very soon we reached a height which commanded a view of a river, a village, and an extensive valley, not visible from the plain below. The sides of the volcano are particularly favourable for cattle; and while the plains below were unappropriated, all the way up were potreros or pasture-grounds, and huts occupied by persons who had charge of the cattle.

"Our only anxiety was lest we should lose our way. A few months before, my companions had attempted to ascend with Mr. Handy, but, by the ignorance of their guide, got lost; and after wandering the whole night on the side of the volcano, returned without reaching the top. As we ascended, the temperature became colder. I put on my poncha; before we reached our stopping-place my teeth were chattering, and before dismounting I had an ague. The situation was most wild and romantic, hanging on the side of an immense ravine; but I would have exchanged its beauties for a blazing coal fire. The hut was the highest on the mountain, built of mud, with no opening but the door and the cracks in the wall. Opposite the door was a figure of the Virgin, and on each side was a frame for a bed; on one of them my friends spread the bear's skin, and tumbling me upon it,

wrapped me up in the poncha. I had promised myself a social evening; but who can be sure of an hour of pleasure? I was entirely unfit for use; but my friends made me some hot tea; the place was perfectly quiet; and, upon the whole, I had as comfortable a chill and fever as I ever experienced.

“Before daylight we resumed our journey. The road was rough and precipitous. In one place a tornado had swept the mountain, and the trees lay across the road so thickly as to make it almost impassable; we were obliged to dismount, and climb over some, and creep under others. Beyond this we came into an open region, where nothing but cedar and thorns grew; and here I saw whortle-berries for the first time in Central America. In that wild region there was a charm in seeing anything that was familiar to me at home, and I should perhaps have become sentimental, but they were hard and tasteless. As we rose, we entered a region of clouds. Very soon they became so thick that we could see nothing; the figures of our own party were barely distinguishable, and we lost all hope of any view from the top of the volcano. Grass still grew, and we ascended till we reached a belt of barren sand and lava; and here, to our great joy, we emerged from the region of clouds, and saw the top of the volcano, without a vapour upon it, seeming to mingle with the clear, blue sky; and at that early hour the sun was not high enough to play upon its top.

“Mr. Lawrence, who had exerted himself in walking, lay down to rest, and the doctor and I walked on. The crater was about two miles in circumference, rent and broken by time or some

great convulsion. The fragments stood high, bare, and grand as mountains, and within were three or four smaller craters. We ascended, on the south side, by a ridge running east and west till we reached a high point, at which there was an immense gap in the crater impossible to be crossed. The lofty point on which we stood was perfectly clear, the atmosphere was of transparent purity, and looking beyond the region of desolation, below us, at a distance of perhaps 2000 feet, the whole country was covered with clouds, and the city at the foot of the volcano was invisible. By degrees the more distant clouds were lifted, and over the immense bed we saw, at the same moment, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This was the grand spectacle we had hoped, but scarcely expected to behold. My companions had ascended the volcano several times, but, on account of the clouds, had only seen the two seas once before. The points at which they were visible were the Gulf of Nicoya and the harbour of San Juan, not directly opposite, but nearly at right angles to each other, so that we saw them without turning the body. In a right line over the tops of the mountains, neither was more than twenty miles distant, and from the great height at which we stood they seemed almost at our feet. It is the only point in the world which commands a view of the two seas; and I ranked the sight with those most interesting occasions, when from the top of Mount Sinai I looked out upon the Desert of Arabia, and from Mount Hor I saw the Dead Sea."

The religion of Costa Rica is professedly Romanist, but they are not so bigoted as the Romanists

of Guatemala. As an example of this, Mr. Trollope tells us that when the Romish bishop displeased the president, the president banished him, and since that time there has been no bishop. "Will they not get another?" asked Mr. Trollope. "No, probably not," was the answer; "it will be so much money saved." "And who manages the church?" "It does not require much management. It goes on in the old way. When they want priests, they get them from Guatemala."





CHAPTER X.


BRITISH HONDURAS.

Buccaneers—Origin of the name Belize—First formation of the settlement—Disputes between the British and the Spaniards—Gradual enlargement of the British settlements—The Belize River—The mangrove—Sailing on the Belize River—Story of Manicoura—The Scotch buccaneer—"The Destroying Hawk"—Treachery of Andrews—Manicoura's despair—Her death—Belize fifty years ago—Gradual improvement—A good governor—Model merchants—The first mission.

DURING the greater part of the three hundred years which elapsed from the discovery of America to the commencement of the nineteenth century, British, French, and Dutch pirates, and very possibly some others also, frequented the eastern shores of Spanish America, allured by the rich cargoes and golden freight of the Spanish galleons employed in transporting the spoil of America to Europe. The intricacies of the numerous reefs, islets, lagoons, and inlets of these seas afforded great advantages to the buccaneers, who became acquainted with channels and hiding-places into which none dared to follow them, and from which they stealthily issued upon their unsuspecting prey. A great many of these buccaneers were our own countrymen. The river and town of Belize were originally named from

Wallace, one of the most renowned among them. His name, like those of Morgan and Lorenzillo, was long a terror to mariners and landmen for hundreds of miles around. The safe and well-concealed harbour of Belize was his retreat; and it was probably under his auspices that the Bay men (or foreign settlers of the Bay of Honduras) first acquired that unenviable notoriety which they long retained. By English writers the Scotch name, Wallace, was written Wallis, and by the Spanish Valis and then Balis, which was finally modified by the English to Belize.

By degrees many of the adventurers who frequented the shores of the Bay, turned their attention from piracy to more respectable sources of wealth, especially to the cutting of dye-woods and valuable timber. Before the middle of the eighteenth century, or more than a hundred years ago, the British settlements in the Bay of Honduras and on the Mosquito shore had become a subject of quarrel between Great Britain and Spain. The Spaniards in vain tried to dislodge from the coast those whom they regarded as intruders. The British settlements slowly but surely increased. The limits, which were by treaty first assigned to the wood-cutters in 1783, were distinctly pointed out as reaching, coastwise, from the Rio Hondo to the Belize or Old River,—an extent of less than sixty miles. The treaty of 1786 added about nine miles more to this line of coast. In 1837 the lands occupied by the British are stated by the Colonial Secretary of State to extend “from the Rio Hondo on the north, to the River Sarstoon on the south,” a distance of nearly 250 miles southward,



reaching almost to the extremity of the Bay of Honduras. This was afterwards extended a little further south to the Cocolée, a small river near the mouth of the Rio Dulce. The western limit, and indeed all the others, except the ocean, seem to depend very much upon the discretion of the occupants, who up to the present time have penetrated as far back as they have found it convenient for themselves.

The British also took possession of several large and important islands in the Bay of Honduras. In 1852 these were proclaimed to be a British colony, to be designated the "Colony of the Bay Islands." This was disputed both by the States of Central America, and by the government of the United States. After much negotiation, another proclamation, in 1860, announced the separation of these islands from the British Crown. They were ceded to the Republic of Honduras; but guarantees were required from that state, securing fully the civil and religious liberty of the inhabitants.

The Belize river empties itself by two channels, which separate at a place called Haulover, where the old piratical settlement of Wallace, and afterwards the seat of government of what is now called British Honduras, was originally situated, and remained until it was removed to the outlet of the southern channel. Here the present town is built, along the sea-shore, on both sides, connected by a wooden bridge. This southern branch of the river mouth may be six or seven miles long, forming a narrow passage through a thicket of mangroves. The northern channel, which carries out by far the greater portion of water, is wide, and in that direc-

tion the sea is seen from Haulover at a short distance. From hence upwards, to a place called the Boom, where the river is artificially narrowed and shut in by an iron chain, for the purpose of arresting the mahogany flooded down from the upper cuttings, the stream has a respectable appearance, and might be navigated by steamboats.

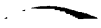
The mangrove is unlike any other tree in the world. Peculiar to lands overflowed by the tides, its trunk starts at a height of from four to eight feet from the ground, supported by a series of smooth, reddish-brown roots, like the prongs of an inverted candelabrum. These roots interlock with each other in such a manner that it is utterly impossible to penetrate between them, except by laboriously cutting one's way; and even then an active man would hardly be able to advance twenty feet in a day. The trunk is generally tall and straight; the branches numerous, but not long; and the leaves large and thick,—on the upper surface of a dark, glistening, unfading green, while below, of the downy whitish tint of the poplar leaf. Lining the shore in dense masses, the play of light on the leaves, as they are turned upward by the wind, has the glad, billowy effect of a field of waving grain. The timber of the mangrove is heavy, and of no great use; but its bark is astringent and excellent for tanning. The seed consists of a long bean-like stem, about the length and shape of a dipped candle, but thinner. It hangs from the upper limbs in thousands, and when perfect, drops, point downwards, erect in the mud, where it speedily takes root and shoots up, to tangle still more the already tangled mangrove



MAKROOTE JOINT.

swamp. Myriads of small oysters, called the mangrove oysters, cling to the roots; among which active little crabs find shelter from the pursuit of their hereditary enemies—the long-legged and sharp-billed cranes, who have a prodigious hankering after tender and infantile shell-fish.

“Leaving Belize,” says Mr. Froebel, “we took the southern channel, and thus had a fine opportunity of seeing the characteristic scenery produced by mangrove thickets lining the banks of a river within the limits of tide-water. Thousands of interwoven branches of an inverted vegetation, as it were, lifting the main trunks of the trees above the flood, and representing what might be called the legs of the forest, form a labyrinth of arches and grottoes, under which a canoe may pass, and where a whole fleet of such small craft might hide itself from view at a hundred yards distance. It is evident that, in addition to the coral reefs of the coast, these thickets must have greatly contributed to the security of the first adventurous settlers who had established themselves here in spite of Spanish persecution and vengeance. By the variety of so grotesque a foreground, the general monotony of our passage through this region was agreeably relieved. Our Caribs paddled away in the best humour, showing their dexterity in the handling of their little oars, by now and then giving a double stroke to the water in the time required for a single one, or by letting them wheel round upon their hand so as to be again in the right position when required by the regular movement of the little crew, while in a low voice they sang their songs of *strange melody in unintelligible language.*



"A little above the Haulover the mangroves disappear. The banks rise above the level of the water, and begin to be fit for cultivation; though in time of inundations, during the rainy season, the whole country is occasionally overflowed. Now and then we pass a little hut, half hidden among some giant plantain-leaves, and overshadowed by a few cocoa-nut-trees."

Many are the tales told of the sufferings of the Indian tribes when the buccaneers frequented these coasts, and, without entering into any detail of the numberless wrongs



COCOA-NUT AND PLANTAIN-TREES.

which were done, we may give as an example the following legend, a popular one in the country :—

Manicoura was the only daughter of the chief of a powerful Indian tribe. She alone could soften the inflexible old man, her father ; she alone could calm his anger and win him from his bloody designs. The ascendancy which she exercised over the ferocious temper of the old chief was owing to her child-like grace and her irresistible gentleness. More than one young chief of the neighbouring tribes had asked her in marriage, but Manicoura refused them all ; and when pressed by her father to make a choice among them, she replied that she wished never to leave him.

Yet when the buccaneers, or English pirates, came to settle in Yucatan, or rather to make it their headquarters, whence they could more easily sail in pursuit of the richly loaded galleons that the Spanish government sent from ports of Mexico to Europe, a Scotchman named Andrews, one of their number, was not long in winning the favour of the father of Manicoura, and attracting the attention of the girl. He was tall, with a handsome face, and very skilful in every kind of bodily exercise. None could use the bow or the gun better than he ; he wrestled wonderfully ; he ran like a deer and swam like a fish ; he was bold, daring, enterprising, and permitted no obstacle to stand in the way of his plans. Qualities such as these necessarily won for him great influence among men who regard bodily strength and skill as the sum of all virtue. Andrews had many admirers among the Caribs, and the “destroying Hawk,” as the old chief was called,

became one of his most devoted friends. The Indian chief admitted the young Scotchman into his own wigwam ; he invited him to share in all his expeditions ; and day after day they might be seen sitting together for hours telling long stories of war and the chase. By presents adroitly distributed among the most influential men, the pirate had contrived to conciliate the good-will of the tribe, and even Manicouira had not been able to continue indifferent to the smooth and fascinating manners of the deceitful stranger. Thus, when at length he made known his wish to be received as one of the Indian tribe, his purpose was hailed by a universal shout of welcome.

Yet, certain as he was of his power over the minds of the Indians, Andrews hesitated long before he ventured to ask the old chief for his daughter's hand. He delayed long, for he feared the pride and haughty temper of the old man ; and when at length he dared to make the bold request, the "destroying Hawk" burst into a fit of fury and indignation,—he instinctively put his hand on his tomahawk, and, had he not been restrained by the sacred rights of hospitality, he would undoubtedly have scalped the presuming Scotchman. At length, however, making a violent effort to conceal his rage, he affected the calmness and composure in which the Indian glories, and coldly saying, "The daughter of a king must match with the son of a king," he dismissed the buccaneer with a wave of his hand, forbidding him to enter his wigwam in future.

But when he saw the deep sadness into which his daughter was plunged by the departure of Andrews, the "destroying Hawk" curbed his pride and calmed

his resentment. At the end of three months, having met the Scotchman fishing on the banks of the Belize, he went up to him, took him by the arm, led him to his hut, and presenting him to Manicoura, said, "Let him be thy husband, and let thy father see thee smile again at the bright sunrise, when the birds sing and the flowers blossom." After this, feasts soon succeeded to feasts in the Indian village, and the young adventurer became the son-in-law of a king.

Months and years passed on, and Manicoura continued ever the same, gentle and devoted. The birth of a son seemed to bind her still more closely to the stranger, when her happiness was disturbed by the sudden death of the "destroying Hawk,"—a dreadful death it was, for the old chief had been found dead in the forest. Vague rumours accused Andrews of the murder, though without any sufficient proof. The only serious evidence against him was, that he alone had accompanied his father-in-law when he went to hunt in the forest. From that time the buccaneers, who had greatly increased in number, began to treat the natives with much harshness, and to assume entire dominion over them. From whatever cause, Manicoura, from the time of her father's death, ceased to receive either attention or kindness from Andrews; he spoke to her coldly, looked at her scornfully, and soon announced his intention to leave the tribe and to divorce his wife. He divested himself of the possessions left by his father-in-law, sold his flocks, and sent away his slaves, so that poor Manicoura was obliged to go herself to hunt or fish to supply her daily wants.

Yet Andrews had no intention of leaving his wigwam alone; he determined secretly to take his son with him. He took advantage one day of his wife's absence to put his plan in execution; but he had not gone many miles when he was overtaken by Manicoura, pale and breathless, beseeching him with tears and cries to give back her child. She was accompanied by a number of Indians resolved to protect her, and, if necessary, to enforce her request. Andrews was unable to resist them; he contented himself with protesting that he had no such intentions as they supposed, and even returned with them to the wigwam of Manicoura.

A few days afterwards the buccaneer set fire to his own hut, and taking advantage of the confusion which ensued, he again tried to seize and carry off the child. The watchful Manicoura, guided by a mother's instinct, once more succeeded in saving her boy, and Andrews was banished for ever from the tribe. He went away threatening soon to return at the head of a considerable force, and to take signal vengeance on those who had offended him. Nor was he long in fulfilling his threat.

He easily obtained a force of two hundred armed men from Wallace, the chief of the English buccaneers, settled on another point of the coast. His march into the Mosquito country was marked by fire and murder,—none dared to resist his guns; and his terrible horsemen, regarded by the Indians as a kind of monsters, spread terror wherever they appeared. All fled at his approach, and the unfortunate natives, when they saw from a distance the flames of their burning huts, sadly exclaimed,

"He whom we have loved and treated as a brother has caused our ruin."

Amidst the general desolation, poor Manicoura well knew that she, of all others, could have no hope of being spared. Neither friend, relation, nor servant remained to sustain her fainting courage. All had fled, and the unfortunate woman, forsaken by every one, took a resolution that could only have been suggested by despair to a mind ignorant of true religion. She dressed as for a feast, she decked herself with all the ornaments which she had worn on the day of her luckless marriage; she put on her son a fine necklace of shells which had been given to him by the "destroying Hawk;" then she took the astonished child by the hand and led him to the bank of the river.

The canoe was still fastened there which had been presented to her by her father on the day when she left him to go to the hut of the stranger. It was now a wreck, like all poor Manicoura's hopes; but the voyage which she purposed to make was not a long one. She cast one last glance on the scene of her former happiness, and at the sight of the flames already rising from the deserted village, her heart seemed to burst in heavy sobs. Despair redoubled her strength: she took her son in her arms and lifted him into the canoe. All the Indian women are skilful in managing the paddle. Manicoura hesitated not an instant in her course—she steered her light skiff right into the current of the cataract!

"Mother! mother!" cried the frightened child, "I am afraid. See! we are going into the rapids!"

"Fear not, my boy. See! my father is there on the

waters; he is beckoning to me—he calls me!” replied Manicoura. The child looked in his mother’s face, and was terrified at the fixed glare in her eye,—then a heart-rending shriek awoke the echoes of the mountain. Swift as an arrow the canoe rushed over the cataract and disappeared in the abyss below!


Manicoura and her son, say the Indians, sleep together beneath the waters of the Belize; but their shades appear at times above the cataract to say to the warriors of their tribe, “Avenge us!” But the Indians are now too weak to venture to attack the white men, and, when her cry for vengeance is disregarded, Manicoura raises fearful storms in the woods and on the waters.

The earliest European settlers in Central America were such as this story describes, lawless adventurers, —often pirates; but early in the present century, the inhabitants of Belize added to their other occupations that of traders in general merchandize. It is true that this commerce was at first no better than smuggling, as British produce, or, indeed, anything not Spanish, was contraband in the American colonies; but, notwithstanding legal restrictions, a brisk trade sprang up, which, after the Independence, became lawful,—though the merchants in the interior still took advantage of the fact that their own tariff of duties was much lower than that of Mexico, to smuggle large quantities of British goods through their territories into those of the neighbouring republic. Foreign manufactures soon superseded, to a great extent, the more costly industry of the country, and the Belize merchants became

princes, who almost entirely absorbed what had so long been the exclusive commerce of Spain; so that this once piratical and smuggling settlement now exchanged a lawless for a legitimate commerce, and soon became to the independent Central States what Cadiz had been to them as colonies.

Unlike the Pilgrim Fathers, who formed the northern settlements about the same period, the founders of Belize entailed no blessings upon their posterity. With the violence and spoliation in which they indulged, their successors inherited their impiety and immoral customs. Among the worst legacies thus received was the curse of slavery, with all its accompanying abominations.

Fifty years ago there was not a place of worship in all the British territory, though it had been previously frequented by professed Protestants for about a century and a half. At that time, and for some time afterwards, the Sabbath-day could not be distinguished from the other days of the week by any outward tokens of respect, though, perhaps, it might be by visibly increased dissipation. The market was in full activity; the stores were unclosed; the wharfs and barcadeers were covered with labourers, beating off and squaring the mahogany, or chipping logwood; the ships in the harbour, which had probably never yet displayed a Bethel flag, were loading or discharging their cargoes; the grog-shops were filled with sailors and negroes; and the government chaplain, after reading the Anglican Liturgy in the court-house to a few more or less sedate hearers, might be seen deliberately superintending his own negroes at work



by the water side. In short, ignorance, intoxication, profanity, and the lust of gain, openly triumphed over decorum as well as religion.

In all the particulars enumerated, and in many other less palpable evils, a great change has taken place in the tone and manners of society at Belize. This change, which will be further alluded to, is attributable only to the direct and indirect influence of the gospel, as it has been introduced by individuals more or less imbued with its principles.

One of the commercial houses at Belize was foremost in seeking the spiritual enlightenment of the benighted inhabitants of the interior. Among chests of Birmingham muskets and bayonets; Sheffield knives, destined to be used as poniards; and Manchester dolls, of which Virgin Marys and saints, or a kind of household gods, are frequently made, there began to be introduced cases of Spanish Bibles and other books, calculated to enlighten the simple, and to counteract the intellectual poison which Spanish and French traders had already largely imported in the infidel literature of the period, boxes of which, it is not unlikely, travelled side by side with others containing this, their only effectual antidote.

Among the various superintendents (invariably military officers) who at different times were sent from England to direct the affairs of this little community, was one whose term of office was characterized by efforts to promote the moral and religious well-being of the settlers. Colonel Arthur, the late Sir George Arthur, afterwards Governor of Van Diemen's Land, and since then of Canada, was his Majesty's Superintendent in Honduras for

several years. To the influence of this noble and Christian man, together with the efforts of the house of Angas and Co. as instruments in the hand of God, must be attributed the origin of the piety and evangelical light which now exist in Central America.

The house of Angas and Co. blended with their mercantile objects the more elevated and enduring interests of the kingdom of heaven. They were not only mindful of the moral destitution of the inhabitants of Central America, but they took great pains to inform themselves of its details and peculiar features; and by the employment of godly commanders in their ships and pious agents and clerks in their stores, by the introduction of good books, and by their general readiness to help forward every good work, they consecrated their influence to God, and became a blessing to the country. Interested themselves in the spread of the gospel in this dark land, they made it their business to enlist the sympathies of others; and in 1820 they called the attention of several of the then existing missionary societies to British Honduras and the Mosquito Shore, as suitable fields for their benevolent efforts, at the same time offering a free passage in their traders, and local countenance and assistance to any missionaries or teachers who might be sent. In England the influence of the house was also exerted for the cause, and for the general welfare and real prosperity of the settlement. Missionaries were accordingly sent out, and a mission established.

But though the gospel has been successfully

planted, and has begun to shed forth its beneficent influences, even where its power is not felt, let it not be supposed that the work of the missionary is yet accomplished in Honduras.

Belize and its dependencies are the only points upon this immense continent, within thousands of miles in every direction, where the gospel of salvation is proclaimed. The believers there constitute a small speck—the only star of light upon a mass of thick moral darkness, extending over the minds of millions of men; and that star is placed on the border of a country which is precisely the centre of the densest population in Spanish America,—a designation extending over a tract of land which includes one-sixth part of the habitable globe.





CHAPTER XI.

MOSQUITO COAST.

Origin of the name—Description of the country—First discovery—British influence—"Admiral Rodney"—A singular introduction—The consular residence—Mosquito royalty—King George and his master—A voyage on the lagoons—Supper with "hunger-sauce"—Indian mode of cooking fish—Cocoa-nuts—The "paper that talks"—"Lord Nelson Drummer"—Palm wine—Palm cabbage—Poison snakes—Iguanas—The "battle of the pigs."

THE coast of Central America bordering on the Caribbean Sea, from Bluefields Lagoon (seventy miles north of San Juan) to Cape Camaron, some distance to the north and westward of Cape Gracias a Dios, has long borne this somewhat vague geographical designation, "Costa del Mosquito," or Mosquito Shore. The name is not derived, as has been supposed, from the abundance of the insects called mosquitoes, but from a horde of Sambos, or mixed Indians and Negroes, which has sprung up there, called *Moscós* by the Spaniards, *Moustics* by the buccaneers, and *Mosquitos* by the English. These barbarians never occupied the whole of this coast, but were always confined to a narrow strip of the shore in the neighbourhood of Sandy Bay.

This coast is, for the most part, alluvial. The climate is moist, and warmer than that of the interior,

but not so salubrious—although in the latter respect it is entitled to rank as high or higher than any of the West India islands. Besides the rivers Wanks and Escondido, it is traversed by several other large streams, rising in the table-lands of Nicaragua and Honduras. Toward their sources these are rough and rapid, but as they approach the ocean they lose their turbulent character, and flow majestically into the sea. Some of these have formed large salt-water lakes or lagoons at their mouths, which constitute very good harbours for vessels of light draught. The greater part of the country is fertile, and capable of producing in the greatest abundance cotton, sugar, coffee, indigo, rice, and tobacco. It has also immense savannas, or open fields covered with grass, which are well adapted for pasturage and the raising of cattle; and almost inexhaustible supplies of mahogany, cedar, rosewood, and other valuable timbers, may be obtained on the coast and in the neighbourhood of the streams. Roberts assures us also, that, back from the rivers, there are broad sandy plains, covered with fine pines,—some of them large enough for the masts of ships. These fine savannas, he adds, much resemble the pine lands of North Carolina. The coves, bays, and islands near the coast abound in turtle, and their shells have always been the chief article of export from the shore.

The geography of the Mosquito Shore is very imperfectly known. Upon the coast, however, there are several very good harbours, and positions capable of easy settlement. Bluefields Lagoon derives its name from a Dutch pirate named Blauvelt, who

had his head-quarters there during the predominance of the buccaneers in these seas. It is a considerable body of water, some thirty or forty miles in length, and almost completely land-locked. There is a bar at its entrance, with but fourteen feet of water; but within the bar it has from four to six fathoms. The great river Escondido, and some smaller streams, flow into it. The lands bordering on these rivers are said to be extremely fertile, and capable of producing all the staples of the tropics.

The coast was discovered by Columbus, in his fourth voyage, in 1502. He sailed along its entire length, stopping at various points to investigate the country, and ascertain the character of its inhabitants. He gave it the name Cariay, and it was accurately characterized by one of his companions, Porras, as "*una tierra muy baja*,"—a very low land. Columbus himself, in his letter to the Spanish sovereigns, describes the inhabitants as fishers, and "as great sorcerers,—very terrible." His son, Fernando Columbus, is more explicit. He says, they were "almost negroes in colour, going naked; in all respects very rude,—eating human flesh, and devouring their fish raw, as they happened to catch them." The language of the chroniclers warrant us in believing these descriptions applied only to the Indians of the sea-coast, and that those of the interior, whose language then was different, were a distinct people.

The great incentive to Spanish enterprise in America, and which led to the rapid conquest and settlement of the continent, was the acquisition of the precious metals. But little of these was to be

found on the Mosquito Shore, and, as a consequence, the tide of Spanish adventure swept by, heedless of the miserable savages who sought a precarious subsistence among its lagoons and forests.

The coast, therefore, remained in its primitive condition until the advent of the buccaneers in the sea of the Antilles, which was about the middle of the seventeenth century. Its intricate bays and unknown rivers furnished admirable places of refuge and concealment for the small and swift vessels in which they roved the seas. They made permanent stations at Cape Gracias and Bluefields, from which they darted out like hawks on the galleons that sailed from Nombre de Dios and Carthagena, laden with the riches of Peru.

About the year 1740, when Britain was at war with Spain, an attempt was made to establish British settlements in various places on the Mosquito Coast. Several planters from Jamaica settled in the country, a superintendent was appointed, and forts were built. But the settlements did not succeed, and in 1784 the forts were demolished and the troops removed.

Yet, although the British government had renounced and given up all its territorial claims on the Mosquito Shore, an intercourse was still maintained with the Waikna Indians through the island of Jamaica, and from the settlements of the Bay. The favourable disposition of this people towards the British, which had been sedulously cultivated from the first, was not suffered to languish. British influence on this important line of coast was kept up by a kind of patronage extended by our govern-

ment to these rude barbarians, under the name of *protection*. The Mosquito chiefs, exalted into kings, were educated and crowned at Kingston and Belize. These kings were pensioned during life, and provided with a private secretary—a kind of keeper—at the cost of the British people.

A most amusing description of the Mosquito Shore and its inhabitants is given in a book entitled “Waikna,” by Mr. Squier. The following extracts give an account of a visit to Bluefields, the capital, and an interview with the king:—

“Bluefields is an imperial city, the residence of the court of the Mosquito kingdom. The town—or rather, the collection of huts called by that name—lies nearly nine miles from the entrance of the lagoon. After much tacking, and backing, and filling, to avoid the innumerable banks and shallows, we finally arrived at the anchorage. We had hardly got our anchor down when we were boarded by a very pompous black man, dressed in a shirt of red check, pantaloons of white cotton cloth, and a glazed straw hat, with feet innocent of shoes; whose office nobody knew, further than that he was called ‘Admiral Rodney,’ and was an important functionary in the Mosquito kingdom. He bustled about in an extraordinary manner, but his final purpose seemed narrowed down to getting a dram, and pocketing a couple of dollars, slyly slipped into his hand by the captain, just before he got over the side. When he had left, we were told that we could go on shore. As I have said, Bluefields is a collection of the rudest possible thatched huts. Among them are two or three framed buildings, one of which is the residence

of a Mr. Bell, an Englishman, with whom, as I afterwards learned, resided that world-renowned monarch, George William Clarence, King of all the Mosquitoes. The site of the huts is picturesque, being upon comparatively high ground, at a point where a considerable stream from the interior enters the lagoon. There are two villages; the principal one, or Bluefields proper, is much the larger, and contains perhaps five hundred people.

"I was not destined to pine away my days in devising plans to obtain an introduction to his Mosquito majesty; for, rising early on the morning subsequent to my arrival, I started out to see the sights of Bluefields. Following a broad path leading to a grove of cocoa-nut trees, which shadowed over the river, tall and trim, I met a white man of thin and serious visage, who eyed me curiously for a moment, bowed slightly, and passed on in silence. The distant air of an Englishman, on meeting an American, is generally reciprocated by equally frigid formality; so I stared coldly, bowed stiffly, and also passed on. I smiled to think what a deal of affectation had been wasted on both sides; for it would have been unnatural if two white men were not glad to see each other's face, in a land of ebony like this. So I involuntarily turned half round, just in time to witness a similar evolution on the part of my thin friend. It was evident that his thoughts were but reflections of my own, and being the younger of the two, I retraced my steps, and approached with a laughing 'good morning.' He responded to my salutation with an equally pregnant 'good morning,' at the same time raising his

hand to his ear, in token of being hard of hearing. Conversation opened, and I at once found I was in the presence of a man of superior education, large experience, and altogether out of place in the Mosquito metropolis. After a long walk, in which we passed a rough-board structure surmounted by a stumpy pole supporting a small flag,—a sort of hybrid between the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes.—called by Mr. Bell the ‘House of Justice,’ I accepted his invitation to accompany him home to coffee.

“His house was a plain building of rough boards, with several small rooms, all opening into the principal apartment, in which I was invited to sit down. A sleepy-looking black girl, with an enormous stock of frizzled hair, was sweeping the floor in a languid, mechanical way, calculated to superinduce yawning, even after a brisk morning walk. The partitions were hung with many prints, in which ‘Her Most Gracious Majesty’ appeared in all the multiform glory of steel, lithograph, and chromo tint. A gun or two; a table in the corner, supporting a confused collection of books and papers, with some ropes, boots, and iron grapnels beneath; a few chairs, a Yankee clock, and a table, completed the furniture and decoration of the room. I am thus particular in this inventory, for reasons that will afterwards appear.

“At a word from Mr. Bell, the torpid black girl disappeared for a few moments, and then came back with some cups and a pot of coffee. I observed that there were three cups, and that my host filled them all; which I thought a little singular, as there

were but two of us. A faint, momentary suspicion crossed my mind that the black woman stood in such a relation to my host as to warrant her in honouring us with her company. But, instead of doing so, she unceremoniously pushed open a door in the corner, and curtly ejaculating to some unseen occupant, 'Get up!' there was a kind of querulous response, and directly a thumping and muttering, as of some person who regarded himself as unreasonably disturbed. Meanwhile, we had each finished our first cup of coffee, and were proceeding with a second, when the door in the corner opened, and a black boy, or what an American would be apt to call 'a young darkey,' apparently nineteen or twenty years old, shuffled up to the table. He wore only a shirt, unbuttoned at the throat; and cotton pantaloons, scarcely buttoned at all. He nodded to my entertainer with a drawling 'Mornin', sir!' and sat down to the third cup of coffee. My host seemed to take no notice of him, and we continued our conversation. Soon after, the sloven youth got up, took his hat, and slowly walked down the path to the river, where I afterwards saw him washing his face in the stream.


"As I was about leaving, Mr. Bell kindly volunteered his services to me in any way they might be made available. I thanked him, and suggested, that, having no object to accomplish except to look for adventures and seek out novel sights, I should be obliged to him for an introduction to the king, at some future day, after Antonio should have succeeded in rejuvenating my suit of ceremony, now rather rusty from saturation with salt water. He

smiled faintly, and said as for that matter there need be no delay ; and stepping to the door shouted to the black youth by the river, and beckoned to him to come up the bank. The youth put on his hat hurriedly, and obeyed. 'Perhaps you are not aware *that* is the king,' observed my host, with a contemptuous smile. I made no reply, as the youth was at hand. He took off his hat respectfully, but there was no introduction in the case, beyond the quiet observation, 'George, this gentleman has come to see you ; sit down.'

"I soon saw who was the real 'king' in Bluefields. 'George,' I think, had also a notion of his own on the subject, but was kept in such strict subordination, that he never manifested it by words. I found him shy, but not without the elements of an ordinary English education, which he had received in England. He is nothing more or less than a negro, with hardly a perceptible trace of Indian blood, and would pass in the Southern States for a 'likely young fellow, worth twelve hundred dollars as a body servant.'

"The second day after my arrival was Sunday, and in the forenoon Mr. Bell read the service of the English Church, in the 'House of Justice.' There were perhaps a dozen persons present, among them the king, who was now dressed plainly and becomingly, and who conducted himself with entire propriety. I could not see that he was treated with any special consideration, while Mr. Bell received marked deference.

"It is a curious fact, that although the English have had relations more or less intimate with this



shore ever since the pirates made it their retreat, during the glorious days of the buccaneers, they have never introduced the gospel. The religion of the 'kingdom' was declared by the late king, in his will, to be the 'Established Church of England;' but the Established Church has never taken steps to bring the natives within its fold. Several Dissenting missionaries have made attempts to settle on the coast; but as the British officers and agents never favoured them, they have met with no success."

The whole Mosquito Shore is lined with lagoons, only separated from the sea by narrow strips of land, and so connected with each other as to afford an interior navigation for canoes from Bluefields to Gracias. The following extract gives an amusing account of a voyage on the lagoons, and up the river Wawashaan:—

"It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when we reached the northern extremity of the lagoon, at a place called the Haulover, from the circumstance that, to avoid going outside in the open sea, it is customary for the natives to drag their canoes across the narrow neck of land which separates Bluefields from the next northern or Pearl Cay Lagoon. Occasionally, after long and heavy winds from the eastward, the waters are forced into the lagoons, so as to overflow the belt of land which divides them, when the navigation is uninterrupted.

"In order to be able to renew our voyage early next morning, our few effects and stores were carried across the portage, over which our united strength was sufficient to drag the dory without difficulty.

All this was done with prompt alacrity on the part of Antonio and the Poyer boy, who would not allow me to exert myself in the slightest. The transit was effected in less than an hour, and then we proceeded to make our camp for the night, on the beach. Our little sail, supported over the canoe by poles, answered the purpose of a tent. And as for food, without going fifty yards from our fire, I shot half a dozen curlews; which, when broiled, are certainly a passable bird. Meanwhile the Poyer boy, carefully wading in the lagoon, with a light spear had struck several fish, of varieties known as *snook* and *grouper*; and Antonio had collected a bagful of oysters, of which there appeared to be vast banks, covered only by a foot or two of water. They were not pearl oysters, as might be inferred from the name of the lagoon, but similar to those found on our own shores, except smaller, and growing in clusters of ten or a dozen each. Eaten with that relishing sauce known among travellers as 'hunger sauce,' I found them something more than excellent,—they were delicious.

"While I opened oysters, by way of helping myself to my princely first course, the Indians busied themselves with the fish and birds. I watched their proceedings with no little interest; and as their mode of baking fish has never been set forth in the cookery books, I give it for the benefit of the gastronomic world, even from a Poyer Indian boy. A hole having been dug in the sand, it was filled with dry branches, which were set on fire. In a few minutes the fire subsided in a bed of glowing coals. The largest of the fish, a *grouper*, weighing perhaps

five pounds, had been cleaned and stuffed with pieces of the smaller fish, a few oysters, some sliced plantains, and some slips of the bark of the pimento or pepper tree. Duly sprinkled with salt, it was carefully wrapped in the broad green leaves of the plantain, and, the coals raked open, put in the centre of the glowing embers, with which it was rapidly covered. Half an hour afterwards, by which time I began to believe it had been reduced to ashes, the bed was raked open again and the fish taken out. The outer leaves of the wrapper were burned, but the inner folds were entire, and when they were unrolled like the cerements of a mummy, they revealed the fish, 'cooked to a charm,' and preserving all the rich juices absorbed in the flesh, which would have been carried off by the heat in the ordinary modes of cooking. I afterwards adopted the same process with nearly every variety of large game, and found it—like patent medicines—of 'universal application.'

"We laid our course for the mouth of a river called Wawashaan, (*hwas* or *wass*, in the dialect of the interior, signifying water), which enters the lagoon about twenty miles to the northward of the Haulover. Here we were told there was a settlement, which I determined to visit. As the day advanced the breeze subsided, and we made slow progress. So we paddled to the shore of one of the numerous islands in the lagoon, to avoid the hot sun, and await the freshening of the breeze in the afternoon. The island on which we landed appeared to be higher than any of the others, and was, moreover, rendered doubly attractive by a

number of tall cocoa-nut palms that clustered near the beach. We ran our boat ashore in a little cove, where there were traces of fires, and other indications that it was a favourite stopping-place with the natives. A narrow trail led inward to the palm trees. Leaving the Poyer boy with the canoe, Antonio and myself followed the blind path, and soon came to an open space covered with plantain trees, now much choked with bushes, but heavily laden with fruit. The palms, too, were clustering with nuts, of which we could not, of course, neglect to take in a supply.

"To obtain the cocoa-nuts, which otherwise could only have been got at by cutting down and destroying the trees, Antonio prepared to climb after them. He had brought a kind of sack of coarse netting, which he tied about his neck. He next cut a long section of one of the numerous tough vines which abound in the tropics, with which he commenced braiding a large hoop around one of the trees. After this was done, he slipped it over his head and down to his waist, gave it a few trials of strength, and then began his ascent, literally walking up the tree. It was a curious feat, and worth a description. Leaning back in this hoop, he planted his feet firmly against the trunk, clinging to which, first with one hand, and then with the other, he worked up the hoop, taking a step with every upward movement. Nothing loath to exhibit his skill, in a minute he was sixty feet from the ground, leaning back securely in his hoop, and filling his sack with the nuts. This done, he swung his load over his shoulders, grasped the tree in his arms, let

the hoop fall, and slid rapidly to the ground. The whole occupied less time than I have consumed in writing an account of it.

"Towards noon we came to a cleared space, much the largest I had seen on the coast; and as we approached nearer, I saw a house of European construction, and a large field of sugar-cane. In striking contrast with these evidences of industry and civilization, a Sambo or Mosquito village, made up of squalid huts, half buried in the forest, filled out the foreground. I recognised it as the village of Wasswatla (literally Watertown), the place of our destination. It nevertheless looked so uninviting and miserable, that had I not been attracted by the Christian establishment in the distance, I should have returned incontinently to the lagoon.

"My unfavourable impressions were heightened on a nearer approach. As we pushed up our canoe to the shore, among a great variety of dories and other boats, the population of the village, including a large number of dogs of low degree, swarmed down to survey us. The juveniles were utterly naked, and most of the older people had nothing more than a strip of a species of cloth, made of the inner bark of the *ule*, or india-rubber tree (resembling the *tappa* of the Society Islanders), wrapped around their loins. There was scarcely one who was not disfigured by the blotches of the *bulpis*; and the hair of each stood out in frightful frizzles, 'like the quills on the fretful porcupine.' Most of the men carried a short spear, pointed with a common triangular file, carefully sharpened by rubbing on the stones; which, as I afterwards learned, is used for striking turtle.

“Forbidding as was the appearance of the assemblage, none of its individuals evinced hostility; and when I jumped ashore, and saluted them with ‘Good morning,’ they all responded, ‘Mornin’, sir!’ brought out with an indescribable African drawl. Two or three of the number volunteered to help Antonio to draw up our boat, while I gave various orders, in default of knowing what else to do. Luckily, it occurred to me to produce a document or pass, with which Mr. Bell had kindly furnished me before leaving Bluefields, and which all seemed to recognise, pointing to it respectfully, and ejaculating, ‘King paper! King paper!’ It was frequently called afterwards ‘The paper that talks.’ This precious document, well engrossed on a sheet of foolscap, with a broad seal at the bottom, ran as follows:—

‘Mosquito Kingdom

‘George William Clarence, by the Grace of God, King of the Mosquito Territory, to our trusty and well-beloved officers and subjects, greeting. We, by these presents, do give pass and license to Samuel A. Bard, Esquire, to go freely through our kingdom, and to dwell therein; and do furthermore exhort and command our well-beloved officers and subjects aforesaid to give aid and hospitality to the aforesaid Samuel A. Bard, Esquire, whom we hold of high esteem and consideration. Given at Bluefields, this — day of —, in this the tenth year of our reign.

(Signed) ‘GEORGE R.’

“The ejaculations of ‘King paper! King paper!’ were followed by loud shouts of ‘Capt’n! Capt’n!’ while two or three tall fellows ran off in the direction of the huts. I was a little puzzled by the movement, but not long left in doubt as to its object, for, in a few moments, a figure approached, creating

hardly less sensation among the people than he would have done among the mob at home. I at once recognised him as the 'Capt'n,' whose title had been so vigorously invoked. He was, to start with, far from being a fine-looking darkey; but all natural deficiencies were more than made up by his dress. He had on a most venerable cocked hat, in which was stuck a long, drooping, red plume, that had lost half of its feathers, looking like the plumes of some game-cock, returning crestfallen and vanquished from an unsuccessful battle with a new rival in the poultry-yard. His coat was that of a post-captain in the British navy; and his pantaloons were of blue cloth, with a rusty gold stripe running down each side. They were, furthermore, much too short at both ends, leaving an unseemly projection of ankle, as well as a broad stripe of dark skin between the waistband and the coat. He bore, moreover, a huge cavalry sword, which looked all the more formidable from being bent in several places, and very rusty. He came forward with deliberation and gravity, and I advanced to meet him, 'king paper' in hand.

"When I had got near him, he adjusted himself in position, and compressed his lips, with an affectation of severe dignity. Hardly able to restrain laughing outright, I took off my hat, and saluted him with a profound bow, and 'Good morning, captain!' He pulled off his hat in return, and undertook a bow.

"The upshot of the ceremony was, that I was welcomed to Wasswatla, and taken to a large vacant hut, which was called the 'King's House,' and dedi-

cated to the Genius of Hospitality. That is to say, the stranger or trader may take up his abode there, provided he can dislodge the pigs and chickens, who have an obstinate notion of their own on the subject of the proprietorship. The 'King's House' was a simple shed, the ground within trodden into mire by the pigs, and the thatched roof above half blown away by the wind. But, even thus uninviting, it was better than any of the other and drier huts, for the fleas, at least, had been suffocated in the mud. Before night, Antonio had covered the floor a foot deep with *cahoon* leaves, and, with the aid of the Poyer boy and one or two natives, induced thereunto by what they universally call 'grog,' had restored the roof, and built up a barricade of poles against the pigs. These were not numerous, but hungry and vicious; and finding the barricade too strong to be rooted down, they tried the dodge of Captain Crockett with the bear, and undertook to squeal it down! They neither ate nor slept, those pigs, I verily believe, during the period of my stay, but kept up an incessant squeal, occasionally relieving their tempers by a spiteful drive at the poles. Between them and pestilent insects of various kinds, my slumbers were none of the sweetest; and I resolved that this should be my last trial of Mosquito hospitality.

"In the afternoon I had a visit from the captain, who told me that his name was 'Lord Nelson Drummer,' and that his father had been 'Governor' in the section around Pearl Cay Lagoon. He had laid aside his official suit, and with simple breeches of white cotton cloth, and a straw hat, afforded a

favourable contrast to his appearance in the morning. He spoke English quite as well as the negroes of Jamaica, and generally made himself understood."

The traveller occasionally left his boat and made excursions by land. He was accompanied by two native Indians, whose skill and resources were very valuable to him. One of these, named Antonio, was his guide on the land; the other, the Poyer boy, was the leader on the water. Their knowledge of the country enabled them to find food, and even luxuries, in ways unknown to Europeans. "One of Antonio's earliest exploits was to cut down a number of the rough-looking palm trees. In the trunks of these, near their tops, where the leaves sprang out, he carefully chiselled a hole, cutting completely through the pulp of the tree, to the outer or woody shell. This hole was again covered with a piece of rind, which had first been removed, as with a lid. I watched the operation curiously, but asked no questions. In the course of the afternoon, however, he took off one of these covers, and disclosed to me the cavity filled with a frothy liquid, of the faintest straw tinge, looking like delicate Sauterne wine. He presented me with a piece of reed, and with a gratified air motioned me to drink. My early experiments with straws in the cider-barrels of New England recurred to me at once, and I laughed to think that I had come to repeat them under the tropics. I found the juice sweet and slightly pungent, but altogether rich, delicious, and invigorating. As may be supposed, I paid frequent visits to Antonio's reservoirs.

"This palm bears the name of *coyol* among the

Spaniards, and of *cockatruce* among the Mosquitos. Its juice is called by the former *vino de coyol*, and by the Indians generally *chicha* (*cheechee*)—a name, however, which is applied to a variety of drinks. When the tree is cut down the end is plastered with mud, to prevent the juice, with which the core is saturated, from exuding. A hole is then cut near the top, as I have described, in which the liquid is gradually instilled, filling the reservoir in the course of ten or twelve hours. This reservoir may be emptied daily, and yet be constantly replenished, it is said, for upwards of a month. On the third day, if the tree be exposed to the sun, the juice begins to ferment, and gradually grows stronger, until, at the end of a couple of weeks, it becomes intoxicating,—thus affording to the Sambos a ready means of getting up the ‘big drunk.’ The Spaniards affirm that the ‘*vino de coyol*’ is a specific for indigestion and pains in the stomach.

“The nuts of this variety of palm grow in large clusters. They are round, containing a very solid kernel, so saturated with oil as to resemble refined wax. It is in all respects superior to the ordinary cocoa-nut oil, and might be obtained in any desirable quantity if means could be devised for separating the kernel from the shell. This shell is thick, hard, black, capable of receiving the minutest carving and most brilliant polish, and is often worked into ornaments by the Indians.

“In the moist depressions or valleys near our encampment, we also found another variety of palm, which often stands the traveller under the tropics in good stead, as a substitute for other and

better vegetable food. I mean the *Palmetto royal*, or *mountain cabbage* (*Areca oleraceæ*), which has justly been called the 'queen of the forest.' It grows to




THE PALMETTO.

a great height,—frequently no thicker than a man's thigh, yet rising upwards of 150 feet in the air. Very few trees surpass it in height or beauty. The trunk swells moderately a short distance above the root, whence it tapers gently to its emerald crown, sustaining throughout the most elegant proportions.

"The edible part, or 'cabbage,' as it is called, from some fancied resemblance in taste to that vegetable, constitutes the upper part of the trunk, whence the foliage springs. It resembles a tall Etruscan vase in shape, of the liveliest green colour, gently swelling from its pedestal, and diminishing gradually to the top, where it expands in plume-like branches. From the very centre of this natural vase rises a tall, yellowish *spatha*, or sheath, terminating in a sharp point. At the bottom of this, and enclosed in the natural vase which I have described, is found a tender white core, or heart, varying in size with the dimensions of the tree, but usually eight or ten inches in circumference. This may be eaten raw as a salad, or, if preferred, fried or boiled. In taste it resembles an artichoke rather than a cabbage.

"The Indians climb this palm, and dexterously inserting their knives, contrive to obtain the edible part without destroying the tree itself. By means of the same contrivance which he made use of in obtaining the cocoa-nuts on the island in Pearl Cay Lagoon, Antonio kept us supplied with palm cabbages, which were our chief reliance in the vegetable line. I found that they were most palatable when properly seasoned, and baked in the ground with some strips of manitee fat, after the manner which I have already described.

"One day, while engaged in gathering dry wood, the Poyer Indian took hold of a fallen branch, under which was coiled a venomous snake, known as the *tamagasa*, called by the English *tommy-goff*, and by the Mosquitos *piuta-sura*, or the poison-snake.



He had scarcely put down his hand when it struck him on the arm. He killed it, grasped it by the tail, and hurried to our camp. I was much alarmed, for his agitation was extreme, and his face and whole body of an ashy colour. Antonio was not at hand, and I was at an utter loss what to do, beyond tying a ligature tightly around the arm. The Poyer, however, retained his presence of mind, and, unrolling a mysterious little bundle which contained his scanty wardrobe, took out a nut of about the size and much the appearance of a horse-chestnut, which he hastily crushed, and mixing it with water, drank it down. By this time Antonio had returned, and, learning the state of the case, seized his machete, and hastened away to the low grounds on the edge of the savanna, whence he came back, in the course of half an hour, with a quantity of some kind of root, of which I have forgotten the Indian name. It had a strong smell of musk, impossible to be distinguished from that of the genuine civet. This he crushed and formed into a kind of poultice, bound it on the wounded arm, and gave the boy to drink a strong infusion of the same. This done, he led him down to the beach, dug a hole in the moist sand, in which he buried his arm to the shoulder, pressing the sand closely around it. I thought this an emphatic kind of treatment, which might be good for Indians, but which would be pretty sure to kill white men. The boy remained with his arm buried during the entire night, but next morning, except being a little pale and weak from the effects of these powerful remedies, he was as well as ever, and resumed his usual occupations. A light-blue

scratch alone indicated the place where he had been bitten.

“The *tamagasa*—a specimen of which I subsequently obtained, and which now occupies a distinguished place among the reptiles in the Philadelphia Academy—is about two feet long. It is of the thickness of a man’s thumb, with a large flat head, and a lump in the neck something like that of the cobra, and is marked with alternate black and dusky white rings. It is reported one of the most venomous serpents under the tropics, ranking next to the beautiful but deadly coral.”

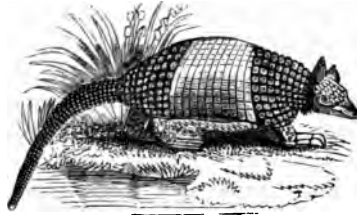
The travellers found plenty of game in the woods, which the Poyer shot with his bow and arrow, or which they sometimes caught in traps. Parrots and paroquets were abundant. These are eaten by the natives, but their flesh is tough, dry, and tasteless. Quails were numerous, and easily caught in traps. Besides these, they occasionally killed a tapir, or feasted on an iguana, or a wild hog.

“It is difficult to imagine uglier reptiles than the iguanas,—great overgrown lizards, with bloated throats and snaky eyes! They seemed to think us insolent intruders, and waddled off with apparent sullen reluctance when we approached. But the law of compensation holds good in respect to the iguanas, as in regard to everything else. If they are the ugliest reptiles in the world, they are at the same time among the best to eat. So our men slaughtered three or four of the largest, selecting those which appeared to be fullest of eggs. Up to this time I had not been able to overcome my repugnance sufficiently to taste them; but now, en-

couraged by H——, I made the attempt. The first few mouthfuls went much against the grain; but I found the flesh really so delicate, that before the meal was finished I succeeded in forgetting my prejudices. The eggs are especially delicious, surpassing even those of the turtle. It may be said, to the credit of the ugly iguana, that in respect of his own food he is as delicate as the humming-bird or the squirrel, living chiefly upon flowers and blossoms of trees. He is frequently to be seen on the branches of large trees overhanging the water, whence he looks down with curious gravity upon the passing voyager. His principal enemies are serpents; who, however, frequently get worsted in their attacks, for the iguana has sharp teeth and powerful jaws. Of the smaller varieties, there are some of the liveliest green. Hundreds of these may be seen on the brushwood and fallen trunks that line the shores of the rivers. They will watch the canoe as it approaches, then suddenly dart off to the shore, literally walking the water, so rapidly that they almost appear like a green arrow skipping past. They are called in the language of the natives by the generic name *kakamuk*.

“In strolling a little distance from our camp before supper, I saw a waddling animal, which I at first took for an iguana. A moment after, I perceived my mistake. It appeared to be doing its best to run away, but so clumsily, that, instead of shooting it, I hurried forward, and headed off its course. In attempting to pass me, it came so near that I stopped it with my foot. In an instant it rolled itself up in a ball, looking for all the world

like a large sea-shell, or rather like one of those curious, cheese-like, coralline productions, known among sailors as sea-eggs. I then saw it was an armadillo—that little mailed adventurer of the forest who, like the opossum, shams death when ‘cornered’ or driven in ‘a tight place.’ I rolled him over, and grasping him by his stumpy tail, carried him into our camp. He proved to be of the variety known as the ‘three-banded armadillo,’ cream-coloured, and covered with hexagonal scales. I



THE ARMADILLO.

afterwards saw several other larger varieties, with eight and nine bands. The flesh of the armadillo is white, juicy, and tender, and is esteemed one of the greatest of luxuries.

“The most exciting incident connected with our stay on the banks of the Tirolas was one which I cannot recall without going into a fit of laughter, although at the time I did not regard it as remarkably amusing. Among the wild animals most common in Central America is the *peccary*, sometimes called Mexican hog, but best known by the Spanish name of *savalino*. There is another animal something similar to the *peccary*, supposed to be the

common hog run wild, called *javalino* by the Spaniards, and *waree* by the Mosquitoes. If not indigenous, the latter certainly have multiplied to an enormous extent, since they swarm all over the more thickly-wooded portions of the country. They closely resemble the wild boar of Europe, and, although less in size, seem to be equally ferocious. They go in droves, and are not at all particular as to their food, eating ravenously snakes and reptiles of all kinds. They have also a rational relish for fruits, and especially for plantains and bananas, and would prove a real scourge to the plantations, were they always able to break down the stalks supporting the fruit. Unable to do this, they nevertheless pay regular visits to the plantations, in the hope of finding a tree blown down, and of feasting on the fallen clusters.

“With these intimations as to their character and habits, the reader will be better qualified to appreciate the incident alluded to. It was a pleasant afternoon, and I had strolled off with my gun in the direction of the plantain patch, stopping occasionally to listen to the clear, flute-like notes of some unseen bird, or to watch a brilliant lizard as it flashed across the grey stones. Thus sauntering carelessly along, my attention was suddenly arrested by a peculiar noise, as if of some animal, or rather of many animals, engaged in eating. I stopped and peered in every direction, to discover the cause, when finally my eyes rested upon what I at once took to be a pig of most tempting proportions. He was moving slowly, with his nose to the ground, as if in search of food. Without withdrawing my

gaze, I carefully raised my gun and fired. It was loaded with buck-shot, and although the animal fell, he rose again immediately, and began to make off. Of course I hurried after him, with the view of finishing my work with my knife; but I had not taken ten steps when it appeared to me as if every stone, stick, and bush, had been converted into a pig! Hogs rose on all sides, with bristling backs and tusks of appalling length. I comprehended my danger in an instant, and had barely time to leap into the fork of a low, scraggy tree, before they were at its foot. I shall never forget the malicious look of their little bead-like eyes, as they raved around my roosting-place, and snapped ineffectually at my heels. Although I felt pretty secure, I discreetly clambered higher, and, fixing myself firmly in my seat, revenged myself by firing a charge of bird-shot in the face of the savages of my assailants. This insult only excited the brutes the more, and they ground their teeth and frothed around the tree in a perfect paroxysm of porcine rage.

"I next loaded both barrels of my gun with ball, and deliberately shot two others through their heads, killing them on the spot, vainly imagining that thereby I should disperse the herd. But never was man more mistaken. The survivors snuffed around their dead companions for a moment and then renewed their vicious contemplations of my position. Some coolly squatted themselves down, as much as to say that they intended to wait for me, and were nowise in a hurry! So I loaded again, and slaughtered two more of the largest and most spiteful. But even then there were no signs of

retreat ; on the contrary, it seemed to me as if reinforcements sprang out of the ground, and that my besiegers grew every moment more numerous !



BESIEGED BY PECCARIES.

“How long this might have lasted I am unprepared to say, had not Antonio, alarmed at my rapid firing, hastened to my rescue. No sooner did my

assailants catch sight of his swarthy figure than they made after him with a vehement rush. He avoided them by leaping upon a rock, and then commenced a most extraordinary and murderous contest. Never did a battalion of veteran soldiers charge upon an enemy with more steadiness than those wild pigs upon the Indian. He was armed with only a lance, but every blow brought down a porker. Half-alarmed lest they should finally overmatch him, I cheered his exploits, and kept up a brisk fire by way of a diversion in his favour. I am ashamed to say how many of those pigs we killed; it is, perhaps, enough to add, that it was long after dark before the beasts made up their minds to leave us uneaten; and it was with a decided sensation of relief that we heard them moving off, until their low grunt was lost in the distance.

“At one time the odds were certainly against us, and it seemed not improbable that the artist and his adventures might both come to a pitiful and far from a poetical end. But fortune favoured, and my faithful gun now hangs over my table in boar-tusk brackets, triumphal trophies from that bloody field! Instead of being eaten, we ate, wherein consists a difference; but I was ever after wary of the waree.”





CHAPTER XII.

PANAMA.

Description of the Isthmus—First discovery by the Spaniards—Vasco Núñez de Balboa—Joins Enciso's party—Obtains the chief command—His expedition across the Isthmus—First view of the Pacific—Spanish form of taking possession of the New World—The Pope's bull—English expeditions—Scotch expedition to Darien—Importance of the Isthmus—Various modes proposed for crossing it—American Railway—Aspinwall or Colon—Difficulties in making the line—Thick forests—Scarcity of workmen—Fares—Other schemes for crossing the Isthmus.

THE Isthmus of Panama, or Darien, is a crescent-shaped belt of land connecting the two Americas. Its length is about 200 miles, its average breadth 40 miles, and at its narrowest part it is somewhat less than 30 miles across. The hill-chains which extend through the Isthmus, uniting the mountain systems of Central and South America, are, near Panama, not more than 260 feet above the level of the Pacific; and from the summit of the conical-shaped hills in the centre of the Isthmus the two great oceans may be distinctly seen. It is this narrow belt of rock, forest, jungle, and morass, which forms the barrier to a direct communication between the two hemispheres, and compels the mariner, whose destination is the East Indies or the western shores of America, to the long, stormy, and perilous voyages round the Cape of


Good Hope, or round Cape Horn. From its important position, the Isthmus of Panama has been termed "The Gate of the Seas," and "The Key of the Universe;" and, small as it is, rival nations have contended for its possession. It now forms part of the republic of New Granada.

The province of Darien was the first part of the American continent upon which the Spaniards established themselves,—Nuñez de Balboa was the first to take possession of it, in the name of the Spanish monarch.

VASCO NUÑEZ DE BALBOA, a Spaniard, born of a rich family, was one of the numerous adventurers who flocked to America soon after its discovery by Columbus. Being a man of extravagant habits, he had become so deeply involved in debt, that he determined to quit his country and go to the New World. Just at that time there was an expedition fitting out for Carthagena, in New Granada, under the command of one Enciso. Balboa contrived to get slyly on board Enciso's ship, and conceal himself in a large cask, which was taken on board as a cask of provisions. When the ship was far off at sea, Balboa came out of the cask, and though Enciso was at first angry with him, he knew he might be of great service to him in America, and therefore pardoned him.

They arrived in America about the year 1510, and Balboa, who, in spite of his prodigality, had some good qualities, soon became distinguished, and obtained the command of the Spanish forces which had landed at Darien.


Though he was kinder to the Indians than most



of the other Spaniards, he was very fond of getting gold from them, whenever he could. One day, after he had received a large quantity of it from an Indian chief, and was weighing it into shares for the purpose of dividing it among his men, a quarrel arose as to the exactness of the weight. One of the sons of the Indian chief, being present, was so disgusted at this, that he struck the scales with which they were weighing it so hard with his fist that the gold was scattered all around.

"Why," said he, "do you quarrel for such a trifle? If you really value gold so highly as to leave your own homes and come and seize the lands and dwellings of others for the sake of it, I can tell you of a land where you may find it in plenty. Beyond those lofty mountains (pointing to the southwest) lies a mighty sea, which people sail on in vessels almost as big as yours. All the streams that flow from the other side of those mountains abound in gold, and all the utensils that the people have there are made of gold."

This was enough for the enterprising Balboa. He inquired of the Indian the best way of getting across the mountains to find this land of gold. The Indian kindly told him everything he knew; but at the same time warned him not to go over there, for the Indians were many and very fierce, and would eat human flesh! But Balboa was not to be discouraged so. He collected a band of one hundred and ninety bold and hardy men, armed them with swords, targets, and cross-bows, and some blood-hounds (for the Spaniards had trained fierce dogs to hunt the Indians, and even the less cruel Balboa was not



ashamed to use them); and prepared to set out on an expedition to the west.

Embarking with his men, September 1, 1513, at the village of Darien, in a brigantine and nine large canoes, he sailed along the coast to the north-west, to Coyba, where the young Indian chief lived, and where the Isthmus of Darien is narrowest. The young Indian chief, on his arrival, sent some friendly Indians with them, chiefly as guides. Leaving half his men at Coyba, to guard the brigantine and canoes, he began his march for the mountains, and through the terrible wilderness.

It was the 6th of September. The heat was excessive, and the journey toilsome and difficult. They had to climb rocky precipices, struggle through close and tangled forests, and cross marshes, which the great rains had rendered almost impassable. September 8, they passed an Indian village at the foot of the mountains, but the inhabitants did not molest them; on the contrary, they fled into the forests.

Here some of the men, from the great heat and travelling in the marshes, became ill. These were sent back by slow marches, in the care of Indian guides, to Coyba. On the 20th of September they again set forward.

The wilderness was so craggy, and the forest trees and underwood so matted together, that in four days they only advanced about thirty miles, and they now began to suffer from hunger. They also met with many rapid, foaming streams, to cross some of which they had to stop and build rafts.

Now it was that they met with a numerous tribe of Indians, who, armed with bows and arrows, and

clubs of palm-wood, almost as hard as iron, gave them battle; but the Spaniards, though comparatively few in number, with their fire-arms and bloodhounds, and the aid of the friendly Indians who were with them, soon put them to flight, and took possession of their village. Balboa's men robbed the village of all its gold and silver, and of everything valuable in it; and even he himself, whose heart the love of gold had hardened, shared with his men in the plunder.

Early the next morning after the battle they set out again on their journey up the mountains. About ten o'clock they came out of the tangled forest and thick and hot air, into the open space and the cool breezes of the mountains. Now they began to take courage. Their joy was heightened still more when they heard one of their Indian guides exclaim, "There it is! from the top of yon height may be seen the great sea!"

Balboa commanded his men to stop, and resolving to be the first European who should behold this new sea, he forbade his men to stir from their place still he called them. Then ascending to the summit of the height which the Indian had pointed out, he beheld the sea glittering in the morning sun.

Calling now upon his little troop to ascend the height and view the noble prospect along with him, "Behold," said he, "the rich reward of all our toil! This is a sight upon which no Spaniard's eye ever rested before;" and in their great joy the leader and his men embraced each other.

Balboa then took possession of the sea, and the coast, and the surrounding country, in the name of

his king—the King of Spain; and in order to make memorials of the event, he cut down trees and heaped up stones into a mound. He also inscribed the names of the monarchs of Castile upon great trees thereabouts. This was the 26th September 1513.

Not content with seeing the ocean, Balboa determined to visit it. He sent on Pizarro, Alonso Martin, and others, to find the shortest way to the sea-shore. Alonso Martin was the first to discover it; and when they returned with their intelligence, Vasco Nuñez himself went down to the shore, accompanied by eighty of his men. He there performed the silly ceremony of wading into the sea, sword in hand, and taking possession of it for the sovereigns of Castile.

After obtaining a considerable amount of gold, he returned to Darien, where he arrived on the 29th of January 1514, and lost no time in sending letters to Spain to announce his great discovery.

Balboa built the town of Santa Maria (of which no vestige now remains), on the coast of the Gulf of Darien; but he afterwards removed the infant settlement to Panama, then a considerable Indian village. It owes its name to the abundance of fish caught upon its shores; Panama, in the Indian dialect, signifying “much fish.”

Balboa was not long permitted to enjoy the fruits of his conquest. A new governor was appointed in his place by the Spanish government, who, jealous of his popularity, threw him into prison on a false charge of felony, and, after a mock trial, caused him to be beheaded in 1517.

The Spaniards at first conceived the ludicrous notion of keeping the discoveries of Columbus a close secret to themselves, and so appropriating the treasures of the New World. Finding this impossible, they next tried to secure the exclusive possession of America, by obtaining a gift of it from the Pope. The words of the form which the Spanish adventurers observed in taking possession of the new countries are superlatively ridiculous. This form begins by giving an account of the creation, the descent of all men from one man and woman, and their division into various kingdoms and nations, and continues thus: "God our Lord gave the charge of all these people to one man, named St. Peter, whom he constituted the lord and head of all the human race; that all men, in whatever place they are born, or in whatever faith or place they are educated, might yield obedience unto him. The whole world he hath subjected to his jurisdiction, and commanded him to establish his residence in Rome, as the most proper place for the government of the world. He likewise promised and gave him power to establish his authority in every other part of the world, and to judge and govern all Christians, Moors, Jews, Gentiles, and all other people, of whatever sect or faith they may be. To him is given the name of *Pope*; which signifies admirable, great, father and guardian, because he is the father and governor of all men. Those who lived in the time of this holy father, obeyed and acknowledged him as their lord and king and the emperor of the universe. The same has been observed in respect of them who, since his time, have been chosen to the

pontificate. Thus it now continues, and will continue to the end of the world."

These lofty pretensions, absurd at any time, seem still more ludicrous when contrasted with the situation of the silly old man at present holding the office of Pope,—an office now very nearly a sinecure.

It was in 1524 that Pope Alexander VI. issued a bull, solemnly conferring the Americas, or New Indias, as they were called, with all the adjacent islands, on the King of Spain and his successors. The name of this pope was Borgia,—a name celebrated for every description of the vilest wickedness. The horrors and bloodshed caused by the Spanish conquerors, corresponded with the crimes of the wretch from whom they pretended to derive their authority.

In 1526, only two years after the issue of this bull, a company of English merchants despatched an agent to the new countries—thus early did England mock the extravagant claims of the pope. The most extreme cruelties were perpetrated by the Spaniards on the luckless traders who fell into their hands; and these iniquities were as cruelly retaliated on the perpetrators. The American seas swarmed with Buccaneers, Filibustiers, "brethren of the coast," adventurers of all nations, who enriched themselves by trade and plunder. They were called Buccaneers from "*boucan*," a name given by the Caribbean Indians to meat dried in a peculiar manner, which formed a principal part of the food of these rovers; and from this was derived the word "Boucanier," corrupted into Buccaneer. The French word "filibus-

tier," is a corruption of the English word free-booter.

Queen Elizabeth ridiculed the Spanish claims to exclusive sovereignty, and her great admiral, Sir Francis Drake, attacked their dominions in America, and took several of their towns. But it was reserved for the iron hand of Cromwell to make the English flag triumphant in the western seas. Under his firm rule, the Buccaneers found their occupation gone; and by his fleets Jamaica was wrested from the crown of Spain. After the Restoration, the sea rovers re-appeared, and the Isthmus of Panama was the scene of many of their most celebrated exploits. It must be said in their favour, that, while carrying on war with the Spaniards, they were, on the whole, kind to the natives, and have left a favourable impression upon them; so that "Me love Inglisman," is an expression of traditional respect which the Indians of this coast are taught in their childhood by their parents.

In the reign of William III., an expedition of a very different kind was projected to the Isthmus of Darien. The founder of the project was William Paterson, a man of sagacity and genius, to whom England is chiefly indebted for the establishment of its great national bank.

William Paterson was born at Skipmyre, in Dumfriesshire, in the year 1655. The house was pulled down only a few years ago which was for generations pointed out as the birth-place of the founder of the Bank of England. He was driven from his country for having relieved the wants of some of his fellow-countrymen, who were suffering

under the cruel persecutions in the reign of Charles II. He was received into the counting-house of a relative established in London, and was engaged in commerce with the West Indies. He was struck with the advantages of the Isthmus of Darien as the site of a great commercial capital, combining the trade of both hemispheres. After many unsuccessful efforts, and much opposition, an Act of Parliament was passed in the year 1695, and, in terms thereof, a charter from the Crown was obtained for creating a trading company to Africa and the New World, granting "power to plant colonies and build forts, with consent of the inhabitants, in places not possessed by any European nations."

The Scottish nation entered warmly into the scheme, as if foreseeing the importance of obtaining possession of this Gate of the Seas. Almost immediately £400,000 were subscribed in Scotland, although it is known that at that time there was not above £800,000 of cash in the kingdom. Colonel Erskine—son of Lord Cardross—and Mr. Haldane of Gleneagles, men of character and fortune, were deputed to receive subscriptions in England and on the Continent, and in a short time the English subscribed £300,000, and the Dutch and Hamburgers £200,000 more.

"These fair prospects were soon overcast. The English merchants, and especially the East India Company, took the alarm, and began to manifest the utmost jealousy against the proposed expedition. The national antipathy between England and Scotland was not yet extinct; and the absurd idea was generally

entertained, that any increase of prosperity to Scotland, arising from an increase of trade, must inflict a positive damage on England. To such a height did these narrow views reach, that on the 13th of December 1695, the Houses of Lords and Commons presented a joint address to King William, expostulating with him on the establishment of the Darien Company, declaring that it would be detrimental, if not altogether fatal, to the interest of the East India Company. Scotland, they said, will become, as it were, one free port for East Indian goods; the Scotch will be able to under-sell us; capital will all rush northward into Scotland, and England will languish and pine away." This opposition was successful: the king sympathized with these views, dismissed his Scotch ministers who were interested in the project, and sent instructions to the English envoy at Hamburg to present a memorial to the Senate, in which he declared that the Darien Company had not his sanction, and warned the Senate against having any connection with it. The independent Hamburg merchants returned the following spirited answer:—"We look upon it as a very strange thing that the King of Britain should offer to hinder us from entering into engagements with his own subjects in Scotland, to whom he has lately given such large privileges by so solemn an Act of Parliament." "But merchants," says the old account, "though mighty prone to passion, are easily intimidated;" and the consequence of this illiberal interference with the Darien scheme, was, that the Dutch, the Hamburgers, and the English, for the most part withdrew their subscriptions,

and the Scotch were left to depend on their own scanty resources for the planning of the projected colony on the Isthmus of Darien."

The Scotch, however, persevered, and boldly defended their rights. Paterson exhorted them not to give up the scheme. "Darien," said he, "the Door of the Seas, the Key of the Universe, will enable its possessors to become the legislators of both worlds, and the arbitrators of commerce." Six ships, of from thirty-six to sixty guns, were ordered to be built at Hamburg; for so resolute was the king against the scheme, that he refused to let the Company have the use of a ship of war then lying at Burntisland. Notwithstanding, twelve hundred men sailed from Leith, in five stout ships, on the 26th of July 1698; and although these men could have forcibly gone from the northmost part of Mexico to the southmost of Chili, "they used no force with the natives, but, in all their transactions, acted fairly and honourably in every respect; and their first act—which originated in the advice of Paterson—was to proclaim *freedom of trade and religion to all nations!*"

During the winter the colonists found the climate of Darien sufficiently temperate, but the health of many suffered under the sickly influence of the returning summer. They had depended on obtaining supplies of provisions from the British colonies in North America. "It was therefore with a feeling of mingled indignation and despair that they learned that King William had sent orders to the governors of the British colonies of Jamaica, Barbadoes, New York, &c., to issue proclamations in

his majesty's name, prohibiting all his majesty's subjects in these colonies from holding any correspondence with the Scottish colony at Darien, or assisting it in any shape, with arms, ammunition, or provisions. That such orders should have been sent,—that the king should have deliberately taken means to starve to death a colony of his own subjects, chartered by his own hand, is hardly credible; and yet the fact is certain." Reinforcements were sent from Scotland, but arrived only to find the colony engaged in hostilities with Spain. The Spaniards had not at first molested the colonists, and, under other circumstances, might probably have continued to be friendly with them; but finding them disowned by their king, and treated as outlaws by their own government, they could not resist the temptation to attack them. "Accordingly about the time that Captain Campbell arrived at the colony, it was threatened with the approach of a Spanish land force of sixteen hundred men, and a squadron of eleven ships. Captain Campbell having been unanimously chosen commander, marched against the land force with a body of two hundred men, and completely broke and dispersed it. Returning to the fort, however, from this successful expedition, he found that the Spanish ships had in the meantime arrived in the harbour, and were investing the town. The siege lasted for six weeks, the colonists defending themselves with the utmost bravery; but at length, provisions having been quite exhausted, and ammunition having become so scarce that the pewter dishes had to be melted down to make balls, they were obliged to capitulate." The

Spaniards granted them honourable terms, and allowed them to depart; but exhausted by hunger and suffering, few of them survived to return to their native country.

“It was long before the Scotch forgot or forgave the ruin of their favourite project. At the union of the two kingdoms in 1707, some compensation was made to the losers by government; not nearly sufficient, however, to cover the national losses.” But this was a public acknowledgment that wrong had been done to them.

Mr. Roberts, many years a resident trader in Central America, visited in 1816 the ruins of New Caledonia, as the Scotch settlement was called. He says: “The ruins of the fort and houses are still very visible; the harbour is excellent; and there seems to be no want of provisions in the country, in the rivers, and in the sea. Had this magnificent project been properly seconded, or not injudiciously opposed by the English nation and King William’s Dutch subjects, the result might, at the present day, in spite of the opposition of Spain, have been glorious to England, eclipsing the splendour of the other great schemes of the Bank of England and the East India Company, also established about that time,—whose directors were eminently indebted to its projector, the ill-requited Paterson, for many of those ideas in which have originated the present prosperity and power of those great national corporations. England, by the imprudence of causing the ruin of that settlement, lost the opportunity of securing to herself greater commercial power than will probably ever again present itself to any nation whatsoever.”

“But let the people of England be free of this stain; the crime lies at the door of a handful of London merchants, and the mean-spirited government which they had the power to influence.”*

The importance of Panama in a commercial point of view, which was thus foreseen by the Scotch nearly two centuries ago, is now universally acknowledged. British, French, and Americans have each their favourite scheme for crossing this natural barrier between the seas. Consuls, envoys, engineers, and surveyors, have been sent from each nation; innumerable plans have been proposed, and several companies formed to execute them. To the Americans belongs the honour of having completed a railway across the Isthmus. On an island off Panama is the depôt of an English company whose vessels run down the Pacific to Peru and Chili. A small English maritime colony is established at this station. British consuls are maintained in various places, and the shadow of Mosquito royalty is kept up, to maintain some degree of influence in this country, where, had Paterson's scheme succeeded, our flag might now have floated supreme.

The American Railway is thus described by Mr. Trollope, who visited Panama in the year 1860:—
“From Cartagena I went on to the Isthmus; the Isthmus of Panama, as it is called by all the world, though the American town of Aspinwall will gradually become the name best known in connection with the passage between the two oceans.

“This passage is now made by a railway which

* Chambers's "Miscellany."

has been opened by an American company between the town of Aspinwall, or Colon, as it is called in England, and the city of Panama. Colon is the local name for this place, which also bears the denomination of Navy Bay in the language of sailors. But our friends from Yankee-land like to carry things with a high hand, and to have a nomenclature of their own. Here, as their energy and their money and their habits are undoubtedly in the ascendant, they will probably be successful; and the place will be called Aspinwall in spite of the disgust of the New Granadians, and the propriety of the English who choose to adhere to the names of the existing government of the country."

"A rose with any other name would smell as sweet, and Colon or Aspinwall will be equally vile, however you may call it. It is a wretched, unhealthy, miserably-situated, but thriving little American town, created by and for the railway and the passenger traffic which comes here both from Southampton and New York. That from New York is, of course, immensely the greatest, for this is at present the main route to San Francisco and California.

The Panama Railway is certainly a great fact, as men say now-a-days when anything of importance is accomplished. The necessity of some means of passing the Isthmus, and the question as to the best means, has been debated since, I may say, the days of Cortez. Men have seen that it would become a necessity to the world that there should be some such transit, and every conceivable point of the Isthmus has, at some period, or by some nation, been

selected as the best for the purpose. This railway is certainly the first that can be regarded as a properly organized means of travelling; and it may be doubted whether it will not remain as the best, if not the only permanent mode of transit.

Very great difficulty was experienced in erecting this line. In the first place, it was necessary that terms should be made with the government of the country through which the line should pass; and to effect this, it was expedient to hold out great inducements. Among the chief of these is an understanding that the whole line shall become the absolute property of the New Granadian Government when it shall have been open for forty-nine years. But who can tell what government will prevail in New Granada in forty-nine years?

And when these terms were made, there was great difficulty in obtaining labour. The road had to be cut through one continuous forest, and for the greater part of the way along the course of the Chagres river. Nothing could be more unhealthy than such work, and, in consequence, the men died very rapidly. The high rate of wages enticed many Irishmen here, but most of them found their graves amidst the works. Chinese were tried, but they were quite inefficacious for such labour, and when distressed had a habit of hanging themselves. The most useful men were to be got from the coast round Cartagena; but they were enticed thither only by very high pay.

The whole road lies through trees and bushes of thick tropical growth, and is in this way pretty and interesting. But there is nothing wonderful in the

scenery, unless to one who has never before witnessed tropical forest scenery. The growth here is so quick, that the strip of ground closely adjacent to the line, some twenty yards perhaps on each side, has to be cleared of timber and foliage every six months. If left for twelve months, the whole would be covered with thick bushes, twelve feet high. At intervals of four and a half miles there are large wooden houses—pretty-looking houses they are, built with much taste—in each of which a superintendent with a certain number of labourers resides. These men are supplied with provisions and all necessities by the Company. For there are no villages here in which the workmen can live, no shops from which they can supply themselves, no labour which can be hired as it may be wanted.

From this it may be imagined that the line is maintained at great cost. But, nevertheless, it already pays a dividend of twelve and a half per cent. So much, at least, is acknowledged; but those who pretend to understand the matter declare that the real profit accruing to the shareholders is hardly less than five and twenty per cent. The sum charged for the passage is extremely high, being 25 dollars, or £5 for a single ticket. The distance is under fifty miles. And there is no class but the one. Everybody passing over the Isthmus, if he pay his fare, must pay 25 dollars. Steerage passengers from New York to San Francisco are at present booked through for 50 dollars. This includes their food on the two sea voyages, which are, on an average, of about eleven days each. And yet out of this 50 dollars, 25 are paid to the railway

for this conveyance over fifty miles! The ordinary kit of a travelling Englishman—a portmanteau, bag, desk, and hat-box—would cost £2, 10s. over and above his own fare.

But at the same time, nothing can be more liberal than the general management of the line. On passengers journeying from New York to California, or from Southampton to Chili and Peru, their demand is no doubt very high; but to men of all classes, merely travelling from Aspinwall to Panama for pleasure, or apparently on business, if travelling only between these two places, free tickets are given almost without restriction. One train goes each way daily; and, as a rule, most of the passengers are carried free, except on those days when packets have arrived at either terminus. On my first passage over, I paid my fare, for I went across with other passengers out of the mail packet; but on my return the superintendent not only gave me a ticket, but asked me whether I wanted others for my friends.

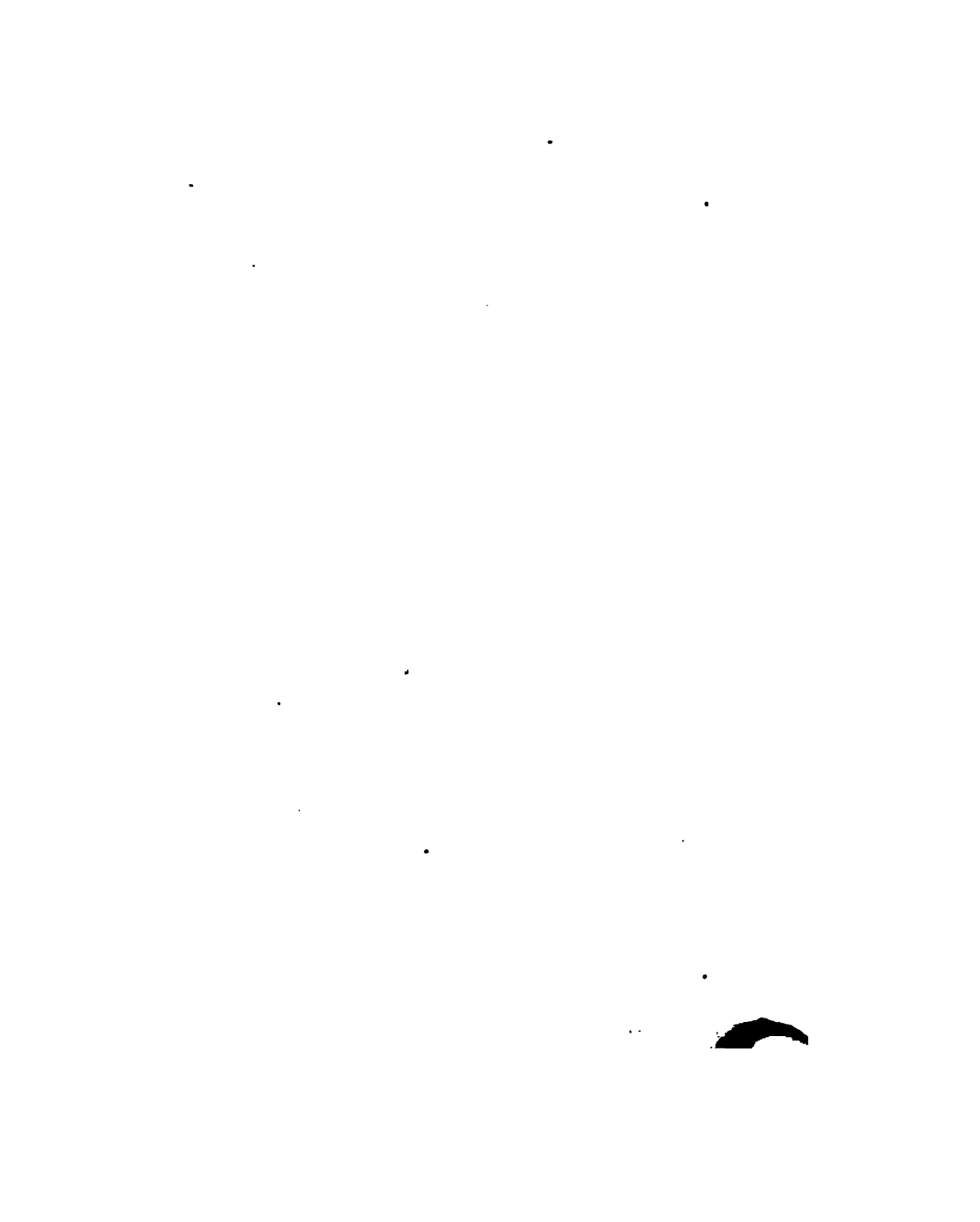
The only other line of railway now spoken of as practicable between the two seas, is one which has been proposed across the republic of Honduras, from Port Cortez to some port in the Bay of Fonseca. This scheme is advocated by Mr. Squier.

There are many plans for canals, to all of which there are objections, unless it be to some route passing through the Lake of Nicaragua. The plan of a canal is advocated by M. Belly, a Frenchman. Mr. Trollope has no great belief in the scheme of M. Belly; he seems to mistrust it more because of the high-sounding words in which it is announced. He

says:—"When has truly mighty work been heralded by magniloquence? Did we have any grand words from old George Stephenson, with his 'vera awkward for the cou'? Was there aught of the eloquent sententiousness of a French marshal about the lines of Torres Vedras? Was Luther apt to speak with great phraseology? If words ever convey to my ears a positive contradiction of the assertion which they affect to make, it is when they are grandly antithetical and magnificently verbose. If, in addition to this, they promise to mankind 'new epochs, new views, and unlimited horizons,' surely no further proof can be needed that they are vain, empty, and untrue."

Mr. Trollope thinks the Panama route the most convenient for British commerce, but that probably it might be advantageous to this country if several of the other schemes succeeded, as competition might lessen the expense of the transit. Meantime, the American Railway has the great advantage of being already made, and may possibly enjoy this advantage for some time, before any of the other plans can come into competition with it.







C

